

THE SHORT STORIES OF

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SHORT STORY 1
2011
10 DAYS IN THE MADHOUSE

DISCLAIMER:

*I wrote this during my ten-day confinement in the Luise Neumann
Sanatorium, north of Berlin.*

DAY 1.
FRIDAY 18th NOVEMBER 2011

So, it's my second night at the Luise Neumann sanatorium. Although, this is considered to be my first of a ten-day stretch in which I am now enduring. The first night was just a twenty-four-hour preliminary examination. Now the real fun begins.

My main doctor suggested that I write down my experience here. The fifty-something-year-old Doctor Kinski looked like a doctor should: short, balding, and with the appropriate German accent. All that's missing from the stereotype was the sofa in his office – that being my biggest disappointment to date. It's truly fucking sad that there's no psychologist sofa for me to lie down upon and whine on about my whatever-fucking-childhood.

It had been an emotional year and things finally reached a peak, so I took some advice and sought professional help. I contacted a few people who lead me to others, and soon I was on a train into the woods just outside of Berlin. It was surprisingly easy. I had anticipated this being an agonizingly difficult process due to the language barrier but finding a place where they spoke English went remarkably smooth. On Wednesday 16th November I checked myself into the Luise Neumann Sanatorium for a standard twenty-four-hour examination. But why check myself into an insane asylum? Because after thirty-three-fucking-years of being told that I'm fucking sick in the head, I snapped. I got sick of being called fucking sick! I wanted to clear this up once and for all. Especially after I was recently labeled 'borderline', which seemed a fair comment at the time, but I wanted a professional opinion on the matter.

So, on Wednesday I admitted myself. Unfortunately, no men in white coats came to collect me. My friends didn't arrange an intervention. I took the initiative and walked freely into the madhouse.

That afternoon the winter air was still, and a pale haze clung to the forest road that led around a lake to the main complex. A dark stone building

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that looked as if it had survived both World Wars. If this was a ghost story, then the only thing missing was the creepy violins building up a terrifying atmosphere. I liked the place. I felt no sense of impending doom or dread or anxiety at all. I was being rational. My only interest in being there was to find out if I truly was fucking insane.

Upon arriving, a slightly retarded looking Asian girl at the front desk told me to sit in a waiting room.

Only four hours later did I meet my first doctor. Doctor Uhl was a young bald man, not who I would have imagined as the head psychologist. He looked more like train driver, or someone working at Burger King. To my relief, he was just there to take down my details and ask a few basic questions. His office was tiny. This was my first encounter with their lack of sofas. Anyway. I talked. Told him my reasons for being there, and he laughed. I wanted to smash my fucking chair over his think skull and burn the place to the ground!

I didn't.

Instead, I told him that that was exactly what I felt like doing. After all, I was there to be honest about how I fucking felt and talk about all the fucking things I thought. He stopped laughing, and then left me alone in his tiny office.

Half an hour later, I was taken to meet Doctor Kinski for the first time. His office was much bigger. We talked for a couple of hours, and soon, one by one, several other doctors came in, asked a question or two, and then left. Some would just stand by the door and stare at me like I was stripper or something. They all seemed very curious about my ideas toward relationships and the violence of my thought patterns. It really was like those bad cop movies, where they keep asking you the same fucking questions again and again.

Eventually, I stayed the night. My room was like a closet, cold with stained walls that looked like cardboard. All through the night I could hear the moans of other patients echoing throughout the building – I however, slept like a fucking baby.

The next day I was given blood tests and a physical check-up. Then I met Doctor Stegner in her office. She was a stick-figure of a vile looking creature. I could tell she had no time nor interested in me. On recollection, I'm sure she only looked up from her desk once and that was to check the clock.

So far, I had done a lot of talking and heard nothing in return. It all seemed like a waste of fucking time. But Kinski said there was no harm in staying for a ten-day trial period. I said what the fuck.

I went home on the train. Wrote on Facebook that was going away. No

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one took it seriously of course. And I didn't tell anyone face to face. Why should I.

And here I am.

What a first day it's been. I got to meet my roommate Otto, he looks like a sixteen-year-old junky. He seemed nervous as fuck, and I didn't make him feel any better. But I'm not here to make friends with psychos. I had my first group-session. There are about eight of us. From twenties to fifties. All men. I can't remember where exactly everyone was from, but from right across Europe. English was the common bond, the only bond. And if you asked me, it was just another waste of my fucking time. Small talk. That was, until the fat guy sudden jumped up and attacked the guy next to him! It was awesome! I sat and watched this guy get his head punched in. It was just like school all over again. The orderlies soon burst in and viciously dragged that fat ass the fuck away like he was a wild animal.

At lunch, I drank some awful black tea and looked over the lunch room. There must have been about forty patients. Everyone was in their pajamas, white bathrobes, and slippers. I have to say, it's fucking freezing in this fucking place! The cold alone is enough to drive you fucking nuts in here. Bathrobes? I don't need a fucking bathrobe, I need a goddamned sleeping bag!

As far as my voluntary treatment goes, I'm allowed to keep my cell phone and read my book, but having no music is a real cunt. I was in the middle of free-association with Doctor Kinski this evening when I got some texts from a female of the species. Kinski suggested that I didn't use my phone while here. And due to the content of the text messages, I reckoned that he had a point.

Yes, you guessed it, I talked about my childhood and my relationship to my family. I found it hard not to laugh. And I had to ask, how many patients actually wanted to fuck their parents. Kinski declined to answer.

After my one-on-one, I saw an ambulance arrive out the front. Whatever had happened it must have been serious, because the police soon showed up.

At dinner, a middle-aged woman sat next to me. She looked normal. Looked like a typical mother. She was Russian or something and seemed interested in my tattoos. I asked her how long she had been in here. She just started to cry. Not sobbing, she just sat there, staring at me as tears ran down her eyes. I don't know what the fuck she was crying about, the food was pretty fucking tasty.

Back in my room, Otto seemed keen to impress me, and was talking shit

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at high-speed. I wasn't interested. Until the fire-alarm suddenly rang out!

Hanging around inside the hospital in bathrobes is cold enough, standing outside however, isn't fucking funny in the slightest!

I wasn't sure what the fucking deal was, but no fire-trucks came, and so, slowly we were all moved back inside. I don't know if I'm crazy, but I seemed to fit in perfectly with these subhumans. No one stared at me and no one cared. But I'm not here to fit in. I'm looking for answers. Though, thus far, the only thing that I've learned is that this place is a fucking shit-hole.

DAY 2.

SATURDAY 19th NOVEMBER 2011

I woke up this morning when the lights automatically burst on at 7am! I hate early mornings, especially on a fucking Saturday!

After taking a good hot shower, I stepped into the bathroom's changing room and found a frail old man standing naked, pointing a crooked finger right at me. I stood still in just my towel, and then he started screaming! Screaming like a woman. I ignored the demented fuck and walked out back to my room. I guess that's when some other patients first saw the rest of tattoos, because the whole corridor suddenly went deathly silent.

I'm now a freak among freaks.

For breakfast I had two cups of that shit black tea, while counting the number of eyes staring at me: sixteen pairs.

Being Saturday, we had art class before lunch. I just stood by the window and looked out at the iron front gates, the overcast sky, and all those surrounding dark trees. Have I become just another crazed idiot staring out the window believing he's a philosopher, while the orderlies laugh their tits off at him. But to be honest, it was the warmest place in the fucking room, there next to the radiator. The after-glow from my boiling hot shower had faded, and the cold was sinking its teeth in again.

Then in came Doctor Bitch (Doctor Stegner). I watched her move from patient to patient, criticizing everything that they did. I find it curious how I refer to people here as 'patients' or 'doctors'. The line between who is in charge and who is less than human is clear, and I'm one of them. At least here they don't pretend to be your friend. So, Doctor Bitch marched over and demanded to know why I wasn't finger painting with the rest of the fucktards. I said I don't paint. She then held up a tiny plastic cup with several pale pills inside. Medication? I didn't agree to take drugs during my stay. She then

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said that either I take the pills, or I paint.

I sat down next to a couple of dim-witted fools, picked up a crayon, and grabbed some of that cheap-ass newsprint paper. I'm having serious doubts that this co-called therapy is anything but a bad joke. After a few minutes of drawing, I found myself sitting alone in the room. Looking up, I spotted all the patients crowded next to the double doors. I hadn't even noticed them move there. Doctor Bitch soon returned. She wasn't impressed by my picture, but clearly the patients had had an emotional reaction to it. I had intended to avoid talking about my art while I was there. Guess I can't now.

So, I'm typing this at lunch. I will soon have a one-on-one with my weekend doctor. Let's see if I failed art class like I did at high school.

Okay, so it's now nearly midnight. After lunch, I had my appointment with the weekend intern, the mid-twenties Helm. You got to be kidding me. They send a kid in here to deal with my shit. Fuck him! I spent the next few hours spewing my attitude toward popular art on this guy, before I went on about the fucking shit art that I make. Let's just say he didn't cure me, but I think I have a new fan. Fuck!

My mood was not exactly upbeat when I made my way to dinner, and then I saw a police van in the drive way. I went and asked the retarded Asian girl at the front desk what was going on. She told me that there was another building out the back where they kept the real violent offenders. The plot thickens.

At dinner, everyone moved away from me. Until one of the orderlies handed over a pill and said it was from Doctor Bitch. I didn't take it.

After dinner, I read my book in the lounge near a radiator. About an hour later, I saw some naked female limping outside. I watched on as a car soon arrived. A man stepped out of the vehicle, yelling furiously at the woman like she was a stray dog in his headlights. That naked thing slowly turned around and stumbled up the front stairs without a word. Then someone started crying on the other side of the room. Madhouses are definitely not fun-houses.

I couldn't sleep, so got up about an hour after the lights went out. The place wasn't a prison, the doors weren't locked. I took a walk through the dark, echoing corridors. Went up to the fourth floor. Found a window with a view to the lake. Then went down to the ground floor and came across an old, indoor swimming pool. Well, it wasn't a pool for swimming. Too small. My mind wandered to evil Nazi experiments. And then I laughed at the effect that Hollywood films have had on my stay in there. There were no ghosts, no serial killers, and no Nazi doctors conducting Satanic experiments. The place was cold, dead, and ugly. And it smelled worse than most hospitals. It's

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the doctors that disappointed me with their lack of dedication. No, it's not disappointing. I knew this wasn't a fucking American movie where people actually give a fuck about each other. This was reality. These doctors are just doing their fucking job. I am just another patient. In a few days they will forget I ever existed.

DAY 3.

SUNDAY 20th NOVEMBER 2011

It's been a long Sunday. Probably due to that fact that I hardly slept and was then awoken at 7am! Every day was exactly the same in there. No sleep-ins on Sunday for this miserable fuck.

I had been thinking about how a lot of things at this insane asylum make very little sense.

First, I must have been a fucking idiot to have voluntarily put myself through this fucking shit! Case closed! I'm simply fucked in the head for staying here!

Second, why are there no locks on the doors?

Third, why am I even given a choice whether to take my meds?

Fourth, why am I allowed to use my cell phone and laptop when no one else can?

Fifth, why am I given options at all?

Is it because I have yet to be diagnosed as imbalanced? Am I really innocent until proven guilty? Or is this all a test?

It makes me worry what will happen if I fail. Seriously, being stuck in this place without the possibility of walking out, truly disturbs me more than that old guy who was pissing blood over my bedroom door this morning. Yet, if the other patients aren't allowed outside, how come I kept seeing people wandering about aimlessly? Was the security here just shit?

Anyway. To recap over today's retarded events.

After I yelled at the cunt to piss off, literally, from my doorstep, I skipped the showers and went straight to breakfast. Had my two cups of vile tea, and then went and asked the guy at the supply room if I could please get a second fucking bathrobe. I was fucking sick of freezing. He laughed like it was the funniest joke he'd already heard a thousand times before and handed me two more bathrobes and some woolly socks. Thanks, cunt! You could have just given me this shit when I had first fucking arrived!

So, I'm feeling a lot warmer in three robes now.

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Today I had the option of Sunday church services or watching *Forest Gump* in the lounge. I decided however, to take a walk outside in my new winter gear. Surprisingly though, it wasn't even that cold today.

I took a stroll around the hospital. Basically, it's like a big 'U'. Once I got around the back, I found a path that led through the trees to a second facility. The holding cells for the real nutters, I assumed. So, I casually wandered over. It was about half the size of the main building, and closer to the lake. The windows were all barred, and I saw no one inside. I walked right around it and came to the edge of the lake where a small jetty extended into the murky waters. I stepped out and stood at the end looking around the quiet view. There were no other buildings anywhere. Just leafless trees encircling that large body of water. It would have been rather peaceful, if not for the screaming that suddenly erupted from the building behind. I then looked down and noticed what could have been blood stains on the cracked wood. Old, dried blood. This whole place just oozed with those warm fuzzy feelings of a chainsaw massacre.

By the time I slowly walked back to my building, I found all hell had broken loose. There was vomit everywhere! It turned out that there was something wrong with the breakfast, and everyone had indiscriminately been handed a plate of yummy food-poisoning. God bless my disgusting black-tea-diet. Suddenly some righteous old trout began hissing at me! I'm not kidding, she hissed like a psychotic cat, and then in her Eastern European accent, she started shrieking, "The mark of Cain!" She spat at my feet, before puking her guts up.

I'd be lying if I said that I didn't get some sense of delight from watching all these motherfuckers hurling upon themselves. Except the smell was something to make even a garbage-man's eyes water.

In my attempt to avoid the sickly, I went exploring again. And I found a library. It was clear that it didn't get a lot of use. The insane have the voices in their heads to inform them on anything that they will never need to know. I stayed in there for some hours reading my book, *Language, Truth & Logic*, by Alfred Jules Ayer. It has been one of the most painful books I've ever endured, yet at the same time it has some of the most incredible passages. If every kid studied this book at school, the world would be a far better place, but vastly more boring.

Lunch came. I went for some more tea and found the mess-hall nearly empty. No surprise. But then I noticed a girl sitting in a corner. Blame my 'biological interest' for needing to check her out. I walked up near the radiator

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and glanced down at the Bible on the table in front of her. Then I walked away. Fucking Bible-bashers.

As I went through the hospital, I found orderlies still cleaning up pools of vomit, and I didn't pity them in the slightest. I found Otto sleeping in our room, a bucket on the floor next to his face, so I continued walking. Glancing into the cell of another patient, I saw the walls covered in the drawings. Drawings of cathedrals and old cities. Fucking excellent work. I was about to walk on, except I noticed my own sketch from yesterday's class lying on the floor. Son of a bitch! But fuck it. He can have the piece of shit.

I was in the lounge, while the heavily edited *Forest Gump* played for a second time, when an ambulance arrived with a new patient. Just another old woman who had lost her marbles.

The afternoon was slow. By dinner time, I saw the Bible girl sitting alone.

It was about eight at night when I heard someone crying in the chapel room. I found that same chick sitting on the floor, hugging her knees. She looked up with big black eyes staring straight back at me. I sneered and left her to her fucking misery.

After three days in this fucking place what have I learned about myself? That my opinion is getting confirmed. The only thing insane about myself is my tolerance for this dump! Another seven days here are going to drive me worse than fucking crazy!

Unless... I entertain myself.

DAY 4.

MONDAY 21st NOVEMBER 2011

Monday was shit. Same fucking psychos as every other day.

This place is shitting on my mood.

My one-on-one with the doctor was only a twenty-minute session.

The group therapy was chaos and ultimately a waste of time.

I have begun distracting myself by fucking with the patients. But is it really possible to mess with someone who's already fucked?

Let's find out.

Fucking hate this fucking place.

Started reading the new book by Richard Dawkins, *The Magic Of Reality*.

There is nothing to look forward to in this place, which reminds me, as above so below!

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DAY 5.

TUESDAY 22nd NOVEMBER 2011

In today's one-on-one session, the doctor said that I have a warped view of women. I have sadistic tendencies. I need anger management. And I should start taking medication to balance my emotional mood swings. But the icing on the cake, was being told to join a 12 Step Program. I couldn't help but laugh in his fucking face.

This place is getting me nowhere! It isn't telling me anything I didn't already fucking know! They're not offering solutions, they are just pigeon-holing me and sweeping me under a carpet of bureaucratic bullshit!

I don't know if this environment is beginning to affect me or if I'm really slipping off the edge, but I found myself walking around outside naked this evening. When the orderlies asked what I was doing, I didn't know what to say. I still don't.

My beard is growing.

I can hear them talking about me behind the walls. Fucking cunts! You think that just because you're not speaking English I don't understand what's going on?!

Later, when they're all asleep, when the drugs kick in, I'll look down on their helplessness. I know where they keep the fucking scissors.

DAY 6.

WEDNESDAY 23rd NOVEMBER 2011

On my way to the showers this morning, I came across a little girl. She must have been seven or eight-years-old. She was standing in the middle of the corridor, staring into another room. I continued toward the bathroom, when she turned and looked up at me. Then in a perfect British accent, she asked, "Are you the devil?" Kids do take tattoos literally, don't they. But the next thing I knew, I was attacked from behind and slammed into a wall! Some tiny American guy with an Elvis-wannabe-hairdo swung wild punches while yelling at me! It was too fucking early in the morning for this crap. I shoved that little prick back with one giant push until I was on top of him, thumping his fucking skull against the cold floor – when suddenly I was the one getting dragged away by three fucking orderlies!

You fucking visitors. Can't you leave us sickfucks alone!

In the infirmary, Kinski apologized terribly for the incident, while a

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dragon-lady of a nurse bandaged my bloody face. Kinski said that the American's wife (a patient here), had killed herself last night, and the prick had obviously been drinking heavily since he had heard the news. I thought I could smell it on his rancid breath as he'd whined like a faggot.

At breakfast, I sat looking at my slightly bruised knuckles. They didn't even hurt. It was a good pain. A spider then crawled across the table. I used my empty cup to break its legs, four with one chop, and then I watched as it limped in circles.

My one-on-one today with Kinski was longer than normal. He wanted to talk about family, specifically why I didn't have kids of my own. I never wanted children, even as a kid I had the cognition that I never wanted to have any. I disliked myself at an early age. I was always the runt of the litter. The weaker brother. One of the first lessons that I learned at school, was that I definitely wasn't the smartest cookie in the cookie jar. Even as a child, the logic of the situation seemed fucking blatant. If I was flawed biologically, and I blamed my parents for creating me, then why would I do the same thing to another person? Why make someone who'd be just as fucked as I am? Sure, as I got older I adapted to my body and got a little clever, but only enough to trick people into thinking I was smarter than I actually was. Street-smarts. But that's not enough! Never was and never will be! But sure, there have been a couple of occasions during my life when I had reconsidered my conviction against having children. When I got engaged, was one. Hell, I had never thought I'd get married when I was younger. And yet, it turned out that I was right to begin with. We broke up! However, in my last relationship, we even talked about names for a kid. Had a good one too. But that's all over now! And like layers of sedimentary soil, I have accepted that my underlining conviction against fathering anyone was absolutely fucking right! I hate people and hate myself! Why create another worthless disappointment that would only fucking hate me too! Fuck that shit! The day I'm finally happy with myself, then, just maybe then, I might consider ruining it all again.

Kinski kept pushing. Why don't I want to be a father and pass on my knowledge to someone who will love me unconditionally?

Okay, listen up. I rejected my own family, so 'unconditional love' is dead to me! Proven fact! As for passing on my 'knowledge'. Has this fucking doctor been listening to a single motherfucking word I've been saying? Why do I read books about science and philosophy, because I don't know this basic shit! I'm a fucking idiot! I don't have any fucking knowledge! When I can remember the periodic table, when I can get a total understanding of

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how global economics work, and when I can fucking spell the entire English language correctly, I might claim to know something slightly fucking useful. Yet even at that point, that still doesn't mean of have a goddamned thing worth sharing beyond grade school intelligence! I do not want and never wish to be a father to a shell of a fucking worm!

So, Kinski asked if I was afraid of responsibility?

Fuck you, cunt! These fucking teenage whores spewing out endless amounts of fucking retarded brats take on no responsibility! Useless fucks spawning like the diseased fucking virus we ultimately are! Yeah, I see a lot of love in this fucking world! Child-rapists, wife-beaters, adult males playing computer games next to their deformed inbred offspring! How am I supposed to respect the sanctity of marriage or the family-unit when it is based on immature, short-sighted indulgence! And when I see these fat cows lining up at McDonald's to shove more oily shit into their swollen litter of pigs, I can't help but smile in disgust at their constant, mundane drudgery! Call me a sadist, call me selfish, call me irresponsible; but don't call those hideous slobs and their incestuous lust anything but the same! Fuck the family-unit! Fuck kids! And fuck this therapy!

I then got up and walked out of my one-on-one for an early lunchtime cup of tea, hoping to find another fucking spider.

In group today, I realized, these are my people! As revolting and disfigured as they may be, I am one of them. So why not become the king of fools. It still makes me an idiot, but it's better to reign in hell than serve in wherever the fuck is supposed to be better than this shit.

At dinner, I sat and scratched my unshaven face, as I looked to my left, and then to my right. Glaring at all those demented fucks, I couldn't help but smirk.

Later, I found that Otto had asked to be removed from my room. I tend to have this effect on people.

DAY 7.

THURSDAY 24th NOVEMBER 2011

This morning, after breakfast, I was taken into an office and interviewed by two cops.

Now, I know that sitting in front of the police is a serious thing, but my mind was elsewhere. I was thinking about what I had been reading last night in Dawkins' book. Everything is about procreation. All I am is a survival-

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mechanism for the genes. ‘Love’ and all ideas of other importance are mere delusions. It reminded me of something my old business partner, AJ, once said, “*Never give a girl an orgasm or you’ll never get rid of her.*” Which brought to mind my past fuck-buddies, and how they always started out care-free, but after a certain amount of time, emotions got involved. And what do they say, that love is bio-chemically no different than consuming large quantities of chocolate. But I’m allergic to chocolate. So, let’s connect all the dots. Love is nothing more than sexual-addiction wrapped up in fancy Christmas paper. It’s all about procreation – the mind and soul be damned!

And then one of the cops WHACKED the side of my head! What the fuck?! Police brutality! Repeating themselves, they stated that apparently every day since I had arrived here, there had been a suicide. I waited for more. But they had nothing more. So? So, fucking what?! Is that the extent of their police work? They looked at the records, saw that I happened to arrive the same day these morons decided to call it quits, and that somehow makes me a suspect? Get the fuck out of here! If they’re saying that I’m that influential on the minds of retards, that I can convince these dipshits to off themselves just by looking at them, then I must be fucking possessed! Get me to a nunnery! Get me to the exorcist! Get me a fucking medal for my black magick powers of fucking awesomeness!

Once I put it to the cops like that, the sour-faced shits let me return to the rest of the sheep without another question. Seriously, is that what you call a police investigation? Fuck the TV and its CSI horseshit! Cops are no more intelligent than the vegetables crawling down these very fucking corridors! For fuck’s sake, I’ve been called a manipulative prick, but where is the evidence that I’ve gotten these fucks to slit their own fucking wrists? Were my fingerprints, hair, or semen sample found on the dead? Get the fuck out of here and go arrest the cuntin’ drug-dealers at the clubs back in Berlin! No one, and I mean absolutely no human-fucking-being can dance, or even listen, to techno for seventy-two-motherfucking-hours straight, without the direct assistance of some pretty hefty class-A substances! Enough fucking said on this facade that’s the so-called war on drugs. What did Bill Hicks say, “*It’s a war on personal freedom, keep that in mind at all times, okay.*”

I found out from the Asian mule at the front desk, that it was Otto who killed himself last night. Well, shit. No loss there.

I removed the plasters from my face this afternoon and started picking the fresh scabs. Am I a child? Maybe I need to get my ass kicked again. Put me in my place. Remind me of where I stand in the universe, and then have a laugh

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about it. You got to laugh about getting your ass whipped. It's like shitting your pants. Sure, it's not funny when it happens to you, but the next day, fuck, it's hilarious! I haven't shit myself in a while. I might be due for an accident sometime soon. Let's say, at dinner! I wonder if I could deliberately shit my pants in a crowded room?

In group today, they wanted to talk about fear, and what we were afraid of. Jesus fucking Christ, for the love of fuck, what the fuck?! Let's all cry, hug, and confess our childhood underlying fucking fear of the dark. Fuck! Is this what therapy was all about, nothing but cliched fucking one-liners. This whole establishment is trite with bullshit like this!

But back to fear. The guest-doctor-of-the-day asked what each patient was afraid of. You then got one of two replies: 1, they would talk nonsense that had nothing to do with anything. Or 2, they would start admitting all this heartfelt terror toward the whole wide world. Prior to my stay at this so-called hospital, I couldn't recall exactly how many girls had told me their rape stories. And after listening to the group confessions, I really must have had the only un-raped childhood in the last hundred years. Is that why I couldn't relate to any of those fucking assholes?

And then it was my turn. "Bruce, what are you afraid of?"

"I was eleven when it happened. It was late one night. I can't remember where my brother or sister were, but to be honest, it wasn't the first time. This time however, was the one I remember the most vividly, when I was eleven. When I first saw the movie Jaws! I was so terrified I literally crawled up the sofa trying to get away from the TV! It left a permanent psychological scar. And I swear to god, that's the sole reason why, to this day, that I still can't swim."

The doctor nodded his head as if I had told him that I had once witnessed my sister jerking off our pet dog. These fucking doctors are like rag dolls, totally desensitized. I could have said that I had just murdered his mother five minutes ago, and he'd probably murmur some deeply thoughtful noise, nod his head, and make a note to buy some more yellow post-its.

I couldn't believe the subject of the next topic. That we were all special. Oh, my fucking god! I spoke up before anyone else could, "If we're all equally special then that defeats the very fucking definition!" And I got up and walked out, yelling, "Yeah, special. Real fucking special!"

I went to take a piss and came across some guy crying his guts out in one of the stalls. I did my best to ignore that sorry sack of shit, but the cunt noticed me. He was American and started going on about it being Thanks

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Giving in the States right now. Oh, yeah. I forgot that was coming up. Like I give a shit! Americans and their universal belief that the entire world revolves around their egocentric fucking culture! I finished taking a leak and was well on my way out of the bathroom when the Yank came hurrying after me. He was yapping on about his mother and wherever the fuck he was from on whatever fucking coast. I did everything in my power to lose that fucker and avoid talking to him. But he wouldn't fuck off. He sat across the table from me in the art room, only to start crying again. Gritting my teeth, I asked what he was doing here? He cleared his eyes, saying that he had married a German girl and now she was pregnant, but he doesn't even love her. Before he could say another word, I stood up and whispered in his ear, "Ain't you just another real American hero. Your mommy must be so fucking proud." And then I walked off. I heard him start to weep again like a fucking baby. This place is full of cunts! And if these fucking doctors think they're going to get me to breakdown and repent; well shit, I'll dress up like a chicken and deep-fry myself long before that fucking happens! If I really am just like all of these fucking people, at least I still have some semblance of fucking dignity left!

After dinner, the girl I'd seen the other day in the chapel, took me by the hand and led me outside. I would have shaken her loose, but it had been over a week since I'd gotten laid. She took me down the driveway, away from the light of the building, when I finally stopped her. Looking straight in my eyes with those bloodshot holes of hers, she lifted her gown. I found it a fascinating sight. I had never seen a circumcised vagina firsthand before. An array of other self-inflicted cuts and scratches spread from her inner thighs and down to her knees. I've seen things like this before. But I still don't know why people insist of sharing their self-humiliation with me. To make me feel better about myself? Am I supposed to do something for them? Or should I start making a record of all these atrocities I'm blessed with the presence of? She seemed shocked by my lack of revulsion at her naked sight. I told her, "I'd fuck you in the ass if I had a condom. But I don't, so I won't." I was about to walk away, when she grabbed my arm. She then stepped back, bent over, and presented her sweet little booty. Oh, the frustration of this place just gets worse! Her pussy may have been a hacked-up piece of meat, but her rump was some fine fucking tail! However, I'm not stupid enough to sodomize some fucked-up slag without protection. No, sir. I don't think so.

DAY 8.

FRIDAY 25th NOVEMBER 2011

Bruce Stirling John Knox

Last night I came as close as I have to leaving this place. Not because of the fuckwit patients, the lame-ass doctors, or how fucking freezing it is in here; but because I wanted to fuck an ex until she screamed. However, I managed to restrain my urges and shake some sense into myself. My weakness for girls is one of the main reasons I'm here in the first fucking place. Control your DSB (dangerous sperm build-up), damn it!

I woke up today with that frustrating tremor in my chest. I haven't 'released the pressure' in a while. I have this pet-theory about sperm, that it's like urine, not literally piss, but like when you got to go, you got to go! If you hold on it doesn't just go away, it gets worse! Cold sweaty palms, racing heart, grinding jaw. It's like withdrawals from a drug addiction. And I know I'm only going to get more hostile. When I was younger, people used to say, "*You just need to get laid.*" But now, most people call me a fucking whore, and yet I'm still this pissed off! Therefore, even with sex I'm still an irritable son of a bitch, so if I stop my addiction now, how colossal will my anger become? Let's find out – or will I snap and rape that cunt from last night? Would that prove me sick? Is that the paradigm-shift I was looking for here? That sex keeps me sane. And if sex is an addiction, then it should be understandable that infidelity is absolutely justified for the benefit of my mental health.

In one-on-one with Doctor Kinski, he talked about how I needed routines to help me get through my days. Baby-steps. Yeah, but in this fucking place there aren't any priorities in any-fucking-thing. It's like being a cow herded from room to room, and therapy is like getting milked. I only wished that my doctor was a Victoria's Secret model, and then she could milk the shit out of me all day long! Sadly however, my doctor was an indifferent old gnome. Maybe he had a granddaughter who would happen to visit during our session today. Maybe. But probably not. Fuck, I need to get laid! Routine would be fine with me, if once a day we got a Thai massage with a complimentary happy-ending. Hell, I would live here full-time if that was part of the deal. I bet this place is hot shit in summer. Why the fuck did I have to test my sanity during a German winter?! Wait, what had the doctor been saying for the last ten minutes? I was finding it hard to concentrate. Routine, repeat, rehearse, copy and paste. But how will that improve anything? I understand that practice makes perfect, but there is no evolutionary trajectory in here. It's just an abnormal constant. There is no climax, no peak to climb, no conflict to overcome. This place doesn't challenge you. It makes you complacent and content to repeat the same old routine. This place is not interested in curing

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me. It wants me to stay the same and stay quiet!

Which reminded me of an ex-friend from a few years ago. She was depressive (like most of the world's population), and her therapist had told her to check into a place kind of like this. But after her initial examination, they decided that she was an alcoholic, so she had to check into rehab in order to sort out her substance-abuse before checking into the madhouse where she could deal with her depression. Well, six-months later she was still in rehab, so I went to visit her. You could say it was because I was a conscientious friend, or you could say, more accurately, because I was curious to see why anyone would happily spend six-long-fucking-months locked-up? The place she was in was the polar-opposite to the Luise Neumann sanatorium. It was summertime, in the south of Berlin, in a small house where everyone seemed pretty content. After I arrived, I understood why she was still there, and planning to stay another three months. A nine-month holiday! She was onto a winning ticket. Though, let's be clear, she wasn't a fucking alcoholic, compared to most Germans she was a fucking virgin! But she was excited about going straight into a clinic to deal with her depression. Yeah, she had a plan, and it was working. Laziness is the greatest achievement most humans strive for, and therefore, at rehab she was a total success. I call her an ex-friend because for the next year she would come up with excuses not to do anything. If she wanted to see me, I always had to visit her, and even then, she canceled most of the time. These people are not friends, these fucking people are scum! Sucking on daddy's wallet into her mid-twenties! Spoiled fucking brats! This world is full of these cunts! Whining about how tragic their fucking shit little lives are, while clinging to titles like fucking 'depression' like it's something to be fucking proud of. It's not! You're goddamn fucking right I'm pissed off! You can call it fucking 'hubris'! Fuck all these little self-pitying bitches! And while I'm at it, fuck all the genuine retards in this fucking shit-hole! Good for nothing! Yes, I condone killing babies with Down syndrome! A worthless waste of DNA that will never achieve Jack shit! A dog is higher on the fucking food-chain!

At this point Kinski said I needed to stop, he didn't like the direction my monologue was going. Maybe he was afraid that I might mention the German taboo and say something rash like: Hitler was right after all – but even I'm not dumb enough to assume that anyone here would find that sarcastic joke funny.

I left one-on-one only to get grabbed by some old woman in the hallway! I thrashed out and shoved the old cunt into the fucking wall! She collapsed

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like a bag of broken bones.

Wait a second. Did I just find the limits of my own psychologist? Jackpot!

I was in the lunch room cooling off with a cup of tea, when Doctor Bitch marched over and slammed down a tiny plastic cup packed to the brim with pills. She then stomped off without a word. What a cunt! I ground the pills up into a powder and dumped it in the giant pot of today's soup behind the sneeze-guard. The security really was shit. God knows what the other patients have put in the food.

One of the orderlies found me sitting on the front steps, he said that Kinski wanted another session this afternoon. I replied with half a grin, "Bring it on, brother!"

After lunch, Kinski and three other people sat in his office. They looked like students, interns, or maybe his kids? The only female was fat and not even slightly fuckable. Kinski got the ball rolling with the topic of jealousy. Bravo! Excellent choice! If subjects were like wine, this would be a superb year! My ex had a big problem with jealousy, and she seemed to think I did too. Let me give you an example of what pissed me off: vultures! I know what vultures are, as I used to be one. Yeah, when I was a teenager. When I was a fucking insecure little shit! A vulture either tries to fuck his friends, or waits till they break-up, and then swoops in and tries for a sympathy fuck. Spineless pricks! But what really annoyed me was when they told my ex how bad I was for her, and how much better they were. They're fucking cowards too fucking lazy to go find someone outside of their one and only social-circle. My girls were typically alpha-females, and generally seem attracted to me because I know my strengths and didn't compare my weaknesses to other fucking assholes. But when my ex began telling me about friends of mine trying to sleaze into her pants behind my back, that bothered me. Ultimately, it's my girl who pissed me off more than the vultures. Most girls are well aware that guys want to fuck them; and so, girls tease them along, treating guys like dumpsters to tell all their problems to. But the very act of her doing so, turned my friends against me and encouraged their vulture-like behavior.

And it was about here that the fire-alarm went off!

So, we all poured outside into the driveway, where we found the building was actually on fire this time! Smoke was gushing skyward from the backside.

It wasn't long before the fire-trucks arrived. However, whatever was burning must have been pretty small and contained, because it didn't take long before those in charge gave the place the all clear.

Kinski said that we would talk on Monday, and then he'd give his final

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report on my condition. I can't wait. It's just a shame I couldn't finish ranting about jealousy.

Later, I had gone to take a piss, and was walking down an empty, second level corridor, when I heard something smash at the other end! Then something heavy struck a wall! My first thought was that the fire had somehow spread, so I went to check it out. I found a broom lying on the floor, sticking halfway out of a distant doorway to my left. And then I heard voices. As I came up to the door frame, I turned, spotting one of the patients naked and hunched on top of Doctor Bitch (seriously, I can't remember her fucking name).

She saw me and cried out, "Hilfe!"

The slob of a man spun like an ape: wild and furious! I didn't even think about it; the only weapon was on the floor in front of me. I grabbed it just as that giant lunged at my throat! The broom swung up right between his legs! He instantly folded in half, and my inertia upward drove my skull right into that fucker's nose! We both fell away from each other. I wasted no time grabbing the now broken broom handle while that rapist moaned, clutching his face and balls in a fetal position. But suddenly he lashed out, so I beat his fucking head with the broom – until I was abruptly tackled by two orderlies from out of nowhere!

I was immediately thrown in a confinement room that was the size of a coffin. My mood was worse than hateful.

Shortly though, Kinski opened the door and took me to the infirmary. Again, he apologized. Doctor Bitch had explained that I'd stopped her attacker. Funny, that's not exactly how I would have put it. I had stopped ,my' attacker.

I spent the rest of the evening crafting a splinter of wood into a shank.

DAY 9.

SATURDAY 26th NOVEMBER 2011

I'm glad I wrote this diary while whittling away my time in this fucking shit-hole. I got kicked out of India in 2006 because I wrote a two-page e-mail about that fucking land of backwards inequality. If I had kept a diary then, it might have gotten me publicly executed. Remember, the truth shall only incriminate you. Back then, I had been told that my coworkers tended to go nuts after three months in India – I snapped within the first twenty-four-hours. Maybe the same happened here. The negative influence of the asylum had made me become part of what I was surrounded by. After all,

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aren't we just products of our environment. Social-conditioning made me this way. The cycle of abuse. Have I come full circle? The circle of life. Can you hear the Disney music chiming in somewhere in the background? That would make this experience perfect, if everyone suddenly jumped up and burst into spontaneous song and dance! I can see a Jesus-wannabe thrusting his pelvis on the lunch room tables while tilting his Elvis-sunglasses down as he winked at the old hag behind the kitchen counter. Fuck it, we're all mad in here, let's go fucking bananas!

It had been another early morning for a Saturday which had made me want to kill puppies. Both the patients and orderlies must have seen it on my face as I went to art class. I sat down and drew a picture of a dog crawling through the guts of another dead mutt, just because I could.

At lunch I went for a walk. The fog had finally fucked off, and everything was damp, but rather warm for winter. I went down past the second building, right as a whole series of police vans drove up. Six vans packed full of cops. I continued on my merry way to the old jetty – when a helicopter flew over the lake. I was standing on the jetty, watching the chopper, when several cops came yelling at me. Angry German cops always sound like Nazi soldiers in old war films. They came charging down the thin wharf demanding something I didn't understand – when the whole fucking wooden framing collapsed! I would have panicked, as I can't swim, but the cold was fucking mind-numbing! Thankfully, I was grabbed and dragged out by a cop, because I was about two seconds away from blacking out.

I somehow ended up in an infirmary, but not in my building. I was in a bed next to a couple of the cops who also fell in the water. My head felt like I had a fucking sandblaster pounding away at my brains. But I have to say, it was the warmest I had been since arriving at this clusterfuck. Snug as a bug in a rug in an atrocious mental asylum. I soon got a harsh talking to from some seriously uptight cops. Though, ultimately, they admitted that I really hadn't done anything wrong. But I should still watch my ass. Danke!

I had to spend the rest of the evening in the infirmary. This place was a lot cleaner, if smaller than the medical center in my building. However, there were a lot more screaming fucks in here. Loud, barking motherfuckers. It reminded me of the one and only time that I went to the Berlin Olympic Stadium to see the one and only football I will ever watch live. The game itself sucked cock, no one got a single goal, but what was impressive was the screaming crowd. Germans have some powerful lungs. I guess the psychos in this place are all football fans.

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While listening to the endless shrieks of the truly demented, I began dwelling on my ex. Thinking of sex. Of good times. Thinking of all the things I wanted to do to her again. It was that usual post-break-up shit. I had had a realization earlier this year: the end of a long-term relationship is like a death. All the plans you make together for one possible future are all over, like they had died.

But hey, the post-break-up revenge-sex and then the get-back-together-sex was always fun. Things get nasty. Nasty but I do believe totally necessary. You're forced to say something or do something that suddenly pushes your perception over the point of no return. And then you can disconnect and no longer regret that it's fucking over. That nasty but necessary moment happened on the first day that I had arrived here. During those text messages last Friday. So maybe this whole asylum experience has been an appropriate place to direct my reaction to the end of a relationship. She had already taken enough of my dignity, so that being locked in this pit seemed like a mental vacation.

With all that time in bed, I got plenty of reading done. I was on the chapter about the Sun and stars, the bit where it said in two-billion years the Sun will become a red giant and fry Earth, but not to worry, because humans will be extinct long before then. It was one of those moments like when you look up at the sky at night and see how vast the universe is and then feel how small we really are. But then you see the flip-side, that if the universe is so enormous, then we really are unique within it. Unless you're living from day to tedious fucking day in this fucking place. Appreciating the same old shit day in, day out, gets fucking agonizing! And in two-billion fucking years, none of this will fucking matter any-fucking-way! So sure, let's just enjoy the here and now. But the here and now is cold, and isolated, and completely fucking shit! Fuck being grateful! The universe doesn't give a rat's ass about you!

I got to get the fuck out of this fucking place!

DAY 10.

SUNDAY 27th NOVEMBER 2011

So what kind of madness went down today? Where do I begin?

I woke up to someone screaming at me from my door! Some wretched old cunt was just shrieking. I jumped straight out of bed, shoved her away, and then slammed the fucking door shut! She continued screeching for no apparent reason, so I was forced to get dressed a whole two minutes before

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the lights automatically burst on at 7am.

I had a shower, then stepped out bare foot directly onto someone's fresh vomit. How infuriating the day was already becoming. I soon discovered, who I assumed was the puker, kneeling in a stall with another deranged fuck eating the very shit out of the toilet.

Making my way down stairs, I couldn't believe my luck, when another woman came screaming as she ran my way! But she tripped and fell dramatically down the huge staircase, nearly taking me with her. She landed flat on her face where blood exploded across the marble floor. I walked right past and continued toward the kitchen for my two cups of shit tea.

At breakfast, I sat thinking about a dream that I had had last night, which reminded me why I will never return to the motherland. Someone then dropped a tray on the floor – and another asshole started going ape-shit at a third smaller guy! The shouting prick went on and on at the little guy who clearly wanted nothing more than to simply disappear.

I went to get away from these fucking clowns and finished my tea on the front steps of the main entrance. It was actually a rather nice morning outside. Until the police drove up – here to see me. I swear, I have never been so popular!

The cops escorted me to the secure hospital, where I was sat in front of an angry looking senior officer. There I was asked to recall what I'd seen yesterday. Which was easy, because I hadn't see diddly-squat, apart from the chopper. That was exactly what they were interested in hearing about. Apparently, whoever was on the chopper was some serious piece of shit. But I wouldn't know, as I was taking swimming lessons, thanks to those other gung-ho cops.

An hour more of that bullshit bad-cop-routine of intimidation tactics only left me bored. Man, I've been eating, sleeping, and shitting with these fucking lunatics for a week now, your tough-guy act ain't impressing no one.

Eventually, I was free to return to my building, where I read my book in the lounge. But there's no rest for the wicked around here. That same asshole was still ripping on the skinny old guy for knocking over some other guy's breakfast tray, and they had followed me into the lounge. The son of bitch just wouldn't shut up. He then cornered the little chap behind a table which he kept pounding with both of his fists. The little guy looked like a starving dog that's been kicked every day of his pathetic fucking life. I just moved into another room full of sickly fucks all coughing their lungs out.

An hour later, I took a leak, and then went back to find that cunt still

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screaming at the little fuck. Do the doctors and orderlies actually want the patients to kill each other? Seriously, where the fuck is the peaceful environment needed in order to nurture a healthy rehabilitation? I moved into the lunch room and had a cup of tea while I read.

Soon in came a new girl. I think she was new. Five-foot-tall, long black hair, big tits. She walked straight over and asked if I had any cigarettes. Typical. Get the fuck away from me! Sneering, she marched off, when that yelling bastard came stomping after the skinny guy again. Jesus fuck! Are they deliberately trying to fuck with me! The big guy then started smacking the little guy on the side of his head, whacking his glasses off. He soon managed to put a table between him and the big guy. I however, was trapped on the side of that little shit, so I stood up. And finally, that ranting cunt shut his fucking mouth. I didn't do anything. I just stood next to the trembling runt and glared back at the bigger prick. He started laughing and backed away, muttering to himself while playing with his own hands. Finally, I could read my fucking book in silence. The little guy sat quietly nearby, like a pooch on a porch.

Before lunch I went to take another piss (I drink a lot of tea, so I make a lot of pee), and I heard some woman shrieking in the female toilets. I took my piss without a care in the world. On my way out of the bathroom, I found some chick crawling along the corridor floor, a trail of blood smeared behind her, coming from between her legs. Casually pushing open the door to the female bathroom, I glared at a twisted piece of wire lying in a large pool of blood. Nothing like a home-abortion to make a mess of things. I stepped over the moaning women and made damned sure I didn't get any of her fucking fluids on my slippers.

More tea for lunch, and a patient next to me ate the hair that he plucked from his head.

I took a walk outside. There Mr. Loud-mouth from earlier, suddenly crashed into my side and threw me to the ground! Pulling me back, he shoved me across the car park. At that point I was seeing more than red. Ripping my three bathrobes off, I grabbed the sharpened, wooden shank from the back of my PJ pants. I was going to bury my wooden blade into his fucking throat, and then stab my thumbs into his ugly fucking eyeballs! Standing my fucking ground, I watched that cunt grunt. So, I started punching my chest like an actual fucking caveman. I was so fucking mad that sweat dripped off my chest despite how fucking freezing it was out there. And then he threw himself at me – so I kicked toward the cunt – but that was when the fucking

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orderlies miraculously decided to step in!

It took three men to carry me away from that other fuck. I was then locked in my room for an hour while I cooled off – by punching the shit out of the door. It turned out that these doors could indeed be locked when required.

Later, I had a one-on-one with yet another young doctor. He asked what had happened outside. I told him that the cunt had jumped me, but don't worry, I'm okay, thanks, asshole.

Five minutes later, I was free and sharpening a new shank.

Dinner came, and it was like every other evening. Until screaming started. Nothing new. But it was more than a couple of people yelling. Everyone crowded around the big windows, so I went into the lounge for a better view. Some old woman was in the front garden wailing at the surrounding orderlies. And then she lit herself on fire! Wow! And I thought she had been screaming before. By the time someone came running with a fire-extinguisher, I'm pretty sure she was toast.

For my last night in this hell-hole, it sure got a lot more entertaining than most nights. I'd like to know if the drugs that they hand out so freely in this place are in fact transforming the idiots into animals. Because after the human-bonfire, they all went wild! Everyone ran about the building trashing everything! A party like 1999 all over again, but with actual anarchy this time! Homo sapiens in a primitive state of degeneration. Fuck Occupy Wall Street, these fucks knew how to riot. Overturning tables, smashing windows, and the whole mob screaming like scrapping cats! It was a simple case of numbers: the 99% psychos were all going berserk at once, and that was, for the meantime, too much for the 1% in charge to handle. The illusion of control had finally broken down. And I walked through the chaos and let it wash over me like pure bliss.

I got into my share of mischief, before the cops arrived and rounded everybody up like cattle, and then locked us in our rooms. Oh, the games I played. Let's just say, I left my mark on the building with sharp scratchy instruments and staining liquids.

And all during that last violent night, horrible sounds echoed throughout those small hours. Things were just getting interesting. But tomorrow I'd blow this Popsicle-stand and be loosed upon the greater asylum of the species. This is my fucking time!

LAST DAY.

MONDAY 28th NOVEMBER 2011

10 Days In The Madhouse

I woke up feeling refreshed and with a mouth full of dried blood. At breakfast, apart from the broken shit, everyone acted as if nothing remarkable had happened last night. Just like they do in the rest of world. No one remembers.

So, I asked Doctor Kinski what the verdict was? He looked blankly back at me as if I had told him that his breath smelled like a fifteen-year-old's cunt. I put it another way and asked if I was insane?

He said morbidly, "You're not."

I smirked and slapped my thigh (literally), "That's what I've been saying for fucking years! I'm perfectly fine!"

Kinski cocked an eyebrow, "I didn't say that."

I was not amused.

He continued, "You're not in-sane. That's not the same as being sane."

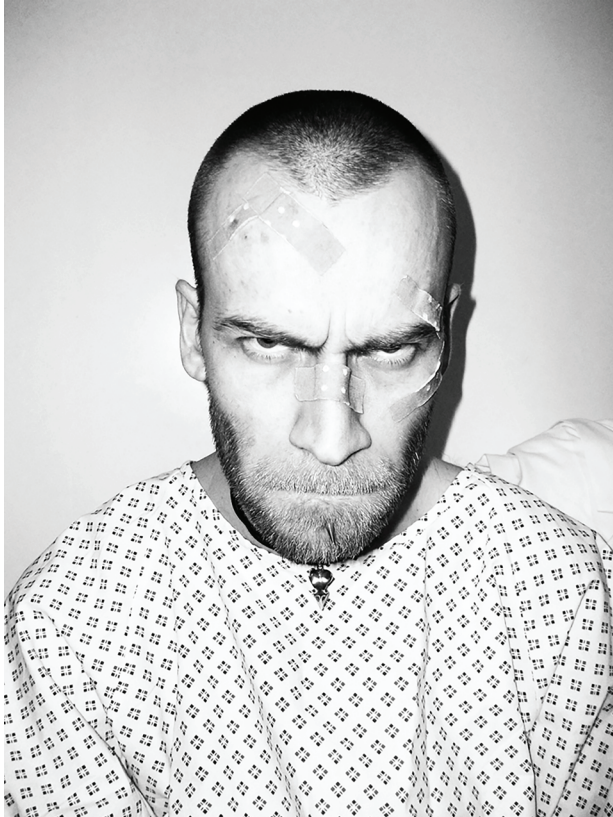
And I thought this guy didn't have a sense of fucking humor! But I was still free to go. He reminded me of his suggestions about anger management and a 12 Step Program. And on my way out of his office, he added that Doctor Bitch had wanted to thank me for helping her on Friday. I closed his door behind me, softly singing, "This is my United States of WHATEVER!"

On Monday morning I walked away from this test of character as a free man. But no freer than when I had first arrived ten long fucking days ago.

And right now, as I type this on the train back to dirty old Berlin, for some reason I am reminded of that saying, "*In the end you don't remember the words of your enemies, but the silence of your friends.*"

Bruce

Bruce Stirling John Knox



SHORT STORY 2
2012
HOW I ENDED UP IN HOSPITAL

DISCLAIMER:

I wrote this a few days after I got out of hospital, at the end of October 2012.

I was recently abducted by a gang, beaten, and then dumped on the German border with Poland.

To make this short story longer, let me medicate my wounds, stretch back, and recall the wonderful adventure from this last week.

On Saturday night, I was writing my book. Alone. Like always. It was past midnight and well into Sunday morning, when I went for a walk. The small hours have always been when I get bad things in my head. Bad, bad thoughts. So, I ventured out into the warm Berlin night. Such hot weather for October. Walking down unknown streets, I had nowhere to go. Just walking. Over thinking. Just angry. Because I am. Walking down dark abandoned paths where girls would fear to tread. I wanted to fucking kill someone.

Soon, before I knew where the fuck I was, I came upon a huge open area, like an empty parking lot, or perhaps where a factory had recently been demolished. There were no lights. It was a massive space with ruins of concrete and brick all around. It could have been a war zone. Just another derelict industrial plot of land near the river, south of Friedrichshain. I wished there was a guard dog that might attack and try to tear my fucking throat out. I've always liked strolling down dismal parts of town. I'll tempt fate, look a dangerous situation in the eye, and then piss in god's face! I fucking double-dare you to strike me down! I do this because, ultimately, I know no one ever fucks with me – and there wasn't anyone around any-fucking-way. So, I walked along that empty lot, fuming and resentful. Shit in my head. And soon I was wondering where the fuck the nearest S-bahn station was, so I could fuck off out of there and stalk an ex. When just then, a van drove past me. A black van. Modern and clean. There were no headlights on as it cruised past. I hadn't heard it coming, as I had my headphones on, listening to *The End*, by The Doors. The van moved ahead. Though, I cared little as I watched it drive all the way to the end of the open plot and around a corner next to a warehouse. I continued walking in the same direction. Reaching that corner, I saw the guys from the van standing next to three other cars. There must have

How I Ended Up In Hospital

been about ten men, all yelling at each other. I continued strolling down that narrow passageway while watching those men in black. They were extremely animated with their gestures toward one another. I assumed they were just a bunch of gang-star wannabe, hip-hop fuckwits trying to out staunch each other. It was all fun and games until gunfire caught my attention!

Being dressed in a black hoody and military jacket, with my shaved head and a full beard, it was no wonder that they thought I was one of them. I guess I really did look like an Eastern European thug while I ducked for cover.

Next thing I knew, there was a gun aimed at my head, and then I got kicked at the back of my knees! Finally, my headphones popped out, and I recognized that they were all screaming Russian. Love that gentle and innocent language. But seriously, what the fuck are you meant to say in this kind of situation? Whoa there, sunshine, I'm just passing through. This is a simple case of mistaken identity. Didn't mean to interrupt your little arms-deal gone wrong. Please remove the gun from my forehead and I'll happily go about my merry little way. But when the shit hits the fan and you're on your knees with a gun aimed point-blank at your fucking head, you have only one truth to face: that you're about to get randomly executed. So honestly, there was nothing to say. No bargaining. No excuses. What did I really have worth living for? I just knelt there with an AK-47 thumping at my head while I watched two other guys get shot against the warehouse! Mere murder, and I just watched. Though, admittedly, this shit was much more exciting than stalking an ex. Then this real mean-looking cunt came over. He had a big beard like mine and must have been about fifty. He pointed a handgun at my left eyeball and said something quietly. I know about three words in Russian and considered saying: *nostrovia!* But I just glared straight back and said nothing. Maybe I was in shock. After all, when I watched my father die, I didn't speak for twenty-four-hours. Maybe that's my ego-defense. Silence. But then again, the more pissed off I get the more silent I also become. The old guy repeated his question. However, I only wondered if I'd be conscious for a moment after he shoots me in the head. Would it even hurt at this range? They say that the brain itself doesn't feel any pain. Then I smiled, sure it'll fucking hurt, I have nerves in my face! I guess the old guy didn't like my smirk, and he pistol-whipped me across the back of my fucking head! Yeah, and I have nerves there too!

I was then thrown in the backseat of a nice new black Rolls-Royce. I have to say, for criminals, they sure did drive in style. I had a henchman on either side. No one held any guns anymore. The old guy was up the front, another

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driving, while classical music played quietly over the stereo. Apart from the bleeding at the back of my head, it was all quite pleasant. I mean, I could definitely see myself hanging out with these cats – under other circumstances.

We drove through Berlin. Right through Mitte, and from my best guess, somewhere past Zoologischer Garten, near Savignyplatz. The other two cars had followed as we pulled into a courtyard in what looked like any old apartment building. Maybe I should have yelled out for help, but I was curious to know where exactly they had taken me? And why the fuck they had even bothered?

Inside we went and up to the fifth floor, to a fucking flash apartment. It was big as fuck and decked out in some mint shit. But what would this evening be without some teenage hookers to add a little spice. You know what I'm talking about, those Russians sure have great taste when it comes to the quality of their skinny whores. Super-models don't look this good. There were three of those drop-dead gorgeous, stick-figure chicks in skin-tight black, sitting in that enormous lounge. They were accompanied by more of that classical music. A silent HDTV played the news from fuck-knows-where, while a real fat fuck sat smoking a black cigar on the sofa among the girls. I'm not sorry to say, all I was interested in was that one little girl with her hair tied back into a bun. She had those juicy blowjob-lips and wouldn't stop staring at me with her puppy-dog-eyes. I could picture myself looking in her pupils while my cock was balls-deep down her throat. Was that wrong of me?

Anyway. Reality came back with a fist in my gut! Hello there, floor. More blah, blah Russian. Then a kick or two in my ribs! That'll wake you up better than any coffee ever could. I blame all the horror films I've seen for completely destroying my sense of anxiety. And I'd like to thank my ex-girlfriends for obliterating any shred of self-preservation I may have once possessed. For again, I couldn't think of anything worth saying at the time. Maybe if I had simply spoken English they would have all burst into laughter and just kicked my ass out on the street, and the night would be back where I started: walking the city alone, wondering what the fuck I was doing with my life.

Either I was incredibly stupid, or I'd discovered a new level of boredom, because I kept my mouth shut. My focus was soon drawn back to that cute little hooker. So, you've got Russian mercenaries beating the crap out of you, a gun in your spine, and yet you're having a staring competition with some anorexic bitch who looks like she wants to slit her wrists. My priorities were

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warped!

That fifty-year-old chap then grabbed my left arm – he had obviously seen the head of my snake tattoo on my hand, and he yanked my sleeve up. What is it with Russians and tattoos? They either suddenly wanted to fuck me, or just thought I looked too warm, as they ripped my jacket and hoody off! Of all of my tattoos, you wouldn't believe that the one they all seemed most interested in was the pig's head on my right shoulder. I swear, I thought I was about ten seconds away from getting the lead-treatment to the back of my head – when suddenly everyone was in awe of my tattoo. The only reaction however, that I paid attention to, was that of the cute little whore. She just looked down at her heels as silence filled the room. Now, I really don't get this part. There I was, in shoes and jeans, completely topless, with these guys all staring at my tattoos. Tattoos, might I add, with words only in English. If I was a Russian gangster, why the fuck would I have English on my skin? But still, all they cared about was the pig's head.

The fat fuck then started chuckling.

It was pretty obvious that I was hot for the little hooker, so he shoved the back of her head and sent her onto the floor right in front of me. Seriously, could this night get any better?

Well, apparently it could!

Into a huge bedroom we were both thrown. Do I really need to tell you what happened next? Yes! Yes, I do! So, the door was locked from the outside. It was dark in there, just one lamp on. The king-size bed had a carved wooden frame, and that classical piano could still be heard. For a moment, I listened to the Russians talking in the other room. They didn't seem particularly happy campers. But me, shit, I had just hit the fucking jackpot! The hooker stood up and looked at me with those terrified eyes as she pulled her dress down off her perfect tits. No bra needed. So, I sat back on the bed, watching like a hungry dog as she swayed her hips slowly from side to side, pushing the dress further down her body. I loved her belly button. Her dress went lower, until it revealed her exquisite little pussy, and then the dress dropped to the floor. You got to love girls who don't wear any panties. God bless each and every fucking one of them. She may have looked nervous, but it's just an act! Chicks like this have been working their asses since they were five. She must have been seventeen, and I wanted every fucking inch of her! She then slowly crawled up the bed as we glared hatefully at each other.

Simply put, she sucked cock better than my previous imagination could have possibly hoped for! I mean, fuck! Watching those beautiful eyes as she

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dragged another length of my erection out of her throat made even dead men moan!

Like everything about this bitch, she was right on time. Not thirty seconds after she swallowed down my Bruce-juice, the door swung open! Whoever these new guys were, they didn't seem to give a fuck about tattoos. Punch to my gut! That makes hit number six! Seven! Eight! And nine!

Next thing, I was kicked down the stairs, nearly broke my neck, and then I became real friendly with the trunk of a car. I had always wondered what it's like to be trapped in the trunk while being driven cross-country. One word: humid! But you know, luxury cars actually have a lot of leg-room back there. However, it would have been far more comfortable if that assortment of semi-automatic rifles weren't also in there with me. I wasn't tied up, just topless in the trunk of a car with several machine-guns – but no bullets. These guys weren't complete fuck-ups. Yet to my surprise, when I reached to the back of my belt, I found my Gerber multi-tool was still sheathed there. Hadn't these guys even searched my pockets? Little good a knife was though.

During that charming little ride (which wasn't that little), I had plenty of time to reflect over what a fantastic fucking blowjob that had been! A content smirk lined my face as I lay there picturing that hooker's pained expression.

Sooner or later though, I started contemplating who the fuck these assholes had mistaken me for? But that was only short lived. Who cares who I might be or who the fuck these shitheads were. The only decent question I could muster was, why the fuck was I still being taken for a ride?

Yeah, yeah. So, some drug-deal, arms-deal, prostitution-deal went askew. But why didn't they just fucking waste me at the gunfight? And what's with the pig's head tattoo? I remembered someone once told me about how significant tattoos are in Russian prisons. Supposedly, if you have a tattoo of an elephant it means you're a cop-killer. I think. So, what the fuck does a pig's head mean? It must stand for: *“On your deathbed, you are entitled to the world's finest fucking blowjob from the youngest little slut in the room!”*

The trunk ride went on for fucking ages. No idea exactly how long. And soon things got real bad. Cramp! Cramp in my fucking leg! There wasn't nearly enough fucking room to stretch the cramp out. Shoot me now!

By the time the car pulled over and the trunk was opened, it was stinking hot in there. Grabbed and dragged out, I found myself in a large, empty warehouse. Plastic restraints tied my wrists together. Then my arms were lifted above my head and looped over the hook from a crane. Left there, I

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was forced to stand on my tippy-toes in order to spare my hands from going numb. Though, this wasn't as bad as it may seem. The shit that they tied my hands together with was thick and rather soft, like duct tape. The beating that followed, however, was not so enjoyable.

Okay. So, there I was. Half-naked, strung-up in some warehouse with a bunch of Russian motherfuckers ready to unleash years of Cold War frustration on my innocent jawline. What could I do but hang around and wait for the ass-whipping.

The first guy lit a cigarette as he walked over, inspecting my predicament like I was a piece of shit he had just discovered on his shoe. I watched his gray eyes examine mine, before he blew a lung-full of smoke in my face. Yummy. Let the torture begin. He stubbed his cigarette out on my right wrist. Motherfucking cunt! I'd always thought burning children with cigarettes would be a blast. And it is! I'm sure. As long as you're not the one under the burning amber. Now, I've got a few tattoos, but different parts of your body hurt in different ways when getting tattooed. For instance, the shoulder, where the pig's head tattoo is, that's a piece of cake, lots of muscle. But the wrist was more sensitive than my fucking spine! However, I took it like a big boy. Cigarette burns are actually similar to getting tattooed: intense but short lived. All you can do is grin and bear it. Big grin, big grin! But that asshole didn't seem amused, so he fucking slapped me across the face! Jesus! Cat-fight much? And then he spat in my fucking eye! Dude, that's not fucking cool!

He walked off with a sneer on his hooked nose, as another fuckhead in a black hoody and leather jacket strolled over while rolling his neck and muttering some more nonsense in Russian. Again, I started wondering what they were talking about. I mean, my German is shit but at least I can pick up 30% of a conversation; but Russian, it's like listening to Led Zeppelin backwards and hoping to hear Satan whisper where he hid the key to my ex-girlfriend's front door – so I can bash her blonde fucking brains in while she's sleeping! This chap then produced a claw hammer which he graciously held up to my face. There he said something real fucking vicious right into my ear. Maybe it was a good thing that I didn't understand Russian, or I might have shit my pants, his tone was bad enough. But still, I stared back at this guy like he was selling Mars Bars after he already knew that I don't fucking eat chocolate! Get the fuck out of here! Guess he wasn't content with my lack of recognition. Yet with a good old sucker-punch to my kidney, he finally got my attention. BAM! Son of a cunt! My feet went limp and my body-weight hung

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on my wrists. It's quite a unique pain, getting punched in the side of your back. Kind of like an electric shock. It winds you and feels like a broken beer bottle has just been snapped off in your lumbar region. He grabbed my chin, held my head up, and again, I was spat in my eye! Ah, come on! Guys! Is that shit really fucking necessary?! This prick with the claw hammer then held up a three-inch nail. He then placed the nail against my left ribs, just below my shoulder-blade, and before I could take a breath, he hammers that fucker into my back. WHACK! Wow! That hurt! About an inch of the nail sunk into my rib-cage and instantly expelled all the air from my lungs. I couldn't breathe. It felt like my chest had collapsed. Like someone had put a huge vice on my torso and crushed my body like a paper-cup with the slamming of a door. I was left hanging. Gagging for air. Every vein in my neck and forehead must have been throbbing as I choked. Suddenly, I remembered someone who I couldn't actually remember, saying, "*Just exhale.*" So, I did. Forced out anything left inside. And what do you know, my lungs automatically took a breath in.

Before I had time to rejoice at the new-found ability of respiration, a hand clamped about my throat, and then slappy-slap-slap again got my undivided attention! At this point, I was about ready to admit my English language skills. Unfortunately, though, I was being choked. The guy was a giant and lifted me right up by my throat. You don't realize how heavy you truly are until your windpipe does all the walking.

Someone else in the warehouse then yelled out. Even if I understood the guy, how the fuck was I meant to reply while this other cunt choked me like a chicken? Frustration like never before! But then I was released. My wrists took my weight. Coughing. Gasping. Spitting. I felt like I was in a *James Bond* film, and wanted to say, "*Do you expect me to talk?*"

Maybe a Mr. Gold-Finger-Bang might reply, "*No, Mr. Bruce. I expect you to eat shit and die.*"

So, upon that delusional logic, I found no reason to start begging now.

Mr. Fisty-Cuffs came back to say hello with his tight white knuckles. Again, a scene from a movie popped into my head. This time, *Rocky*. During his training, when he was beating that hung carcass in the slaughter house. Tenderize the meat. I am the meat. Beat the meat! Beat me good and hard! I've been a bad boy, buddy! I need to suffer! Make me pay for all the things I've gotten away with! Beat me for the rules I've broken! Become the divine hand of eternal justice and smite me! Come on, you can play karma, and I'll play the part of the universal dumbfuck who's in need of a good old-

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fashioned flogging. I'm Jack's well-used boxing-bag.

I would like to thank all the years that I've spent doing my morning sit-ups, as I took that cunt's beating, and nearly started laughing when he gave up. Come on, you faggot! I punch myself harder than that just for the fun of it, you fucking pussy! Come on! I can take your best fucking shot! Come on, for fuck's sake! I'm revved up and ready for fucking more! But when that shit-head thumped me in the face, okay, that knocked my senses sideways.

Those pricks yelled at one another, while I dangled there and spat blood on the concrete. The big guy then pulled out a handgun, and pistol-whipped me, before pressing the barrel up under my jaw. What could you do but eyeball that fuck and dare him to pull the fucking trigger. Do it, you fucking prick! If I had something worth living for, I have might squirmed.

Another car then slowly pulled into the open warehouse.

And slowly all those tough guys backed off.

A guy with a mighty impressive gray mustache exited the vehicle and quietly walked toward me. He looked like Otto von Bismarck dressed in a black hoody and leather jacket. This older chap was clearly higher on the political-ladder among the organized criminals. The first thing he did, after walking straight up to me, was stare inconsolably at my feet. This guy had a brain, and you could see it working beneath his subtle expression. He just stood in front of me, staring at my shoes.

No one said anything.

Silence.

Then the old chap raised his hand, gesturing at my shoes. He didn't say a fucking word. Just pointed with his open palm at my feet. One of the other Russians stepped up closer and also stared at my shadow.

Okay, I have big feet. Sue me!

The mustache guy then looked in my eyes and spoke slow as death, "I do like your Chuck Taylors."

I smiled, "Thanks. They're great for playing the drums in."

The other guy looked like he had a live lobster in his underpants. The mustache guy stared at the nail in my ribs, and then tapped it with his finger tip. My smile disappeared. The other fifty-year-old guy then stepped up and muttered something quietly to the mustache guy, who simply ignored him.

And just like that, they all turned around and walked away.

They left me hanging there.

Watching as they made their way to their respective automobiles, I noticed their shoes: all black and leather. Guess my Chucks gave the game away. And

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perhaps saved my neck.

The cars systematically pulled out and drove away.

Looking around the abandoned warehouse, I found myself utterly alone. If this was a film, we would fade to black and I'd automatically wake up in hospital.

Unfortunately, this wasn't a movie.

So, I was left hanging from my wrists. Burned, choked, beaten, and with a fucking nail sticking out of my back. Could be worse. That hot little whore could have bitten off my dick. As some ancient Chinese proverb probably never said: always look on the bright side of a Russian abduction. So, I glanced upward. Took a deep breath. And then said aloud to no one, "Pleasure doing business with you!"

But seriously kids, don't make yourself laugh while you've got a nail sticking out of your fucking ribs. It's painful as fuck!

First thing first. Stand up straight, stretch, and jump in order to unhook my wrists. And then collapse in the fetal position on the concrete while you cringe in agony and strain to catch a fucking breath.

Saturday had been a beauty of a day, but at that time of the morning, I was starting to freeze my balls off as I lay without a fucking shirt in that pitch fucking black. I soon used the blade from my multi-tool to cut the tape around my wrists. And with the pliers, I tried to pull the nail from my ribs. Big mistake! Don't touch that fucker! Not today, you fuck!

So, get up!

Get up!

Get up, boy!

Looking around the darkness, I stumbled outside. Ah, the lovely ambiguous forests of anywhere in the greater countryside of Germany. Where the fuck was I?! Unlike a film, there wasn't anyone coming to save me, or even pick me up. I was, as always, on my own.

There was no point in thinking about it, so I walked, following the only gravel road that presented itself. Keep moving. Keep warm. Keep going. Spiral out. Yet the depressing idea that I was very possibly miles from somewhere, only pissed me off. The nail pissed me off, the cold pissed me off, and this endless fucking country road was absolutely intolerable! I was pissed-the-fuck-off! Those cunts could have at least shot me in the face for all the trouble this had been. Thanks for leaving me to fucking rot! Fucking assholes!

But speak of the devil and he shall appear.

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It turned out, after all, that they must have decided it was best to clean up their fuck up. Standing in the middle of the road, I watched the headlights from one of the cars coming back to finish the job, and I considered the options. Hide, but why bother. So, I stood where I was until the approaching headlights became blinding. My multi-tool was still in my hand, hid against the side of my jeans. When you go down, you go down fighting. That lone car stopped a good five meters away, and the giant who had liked to choke me, stepped out. No words needed. He didn't see the knife in my hand. Walking casually, he looked as if he was planning to simply march over me like a fucking steamroller. I hunched over (in real pain), and then that giant lunged at me with both enormous arms!

I ducked, slipping under his left paw as I drove my knife into the back of his fucking knee! He screamed and dropped like a fucking elephant shit. Somehow, he grabbed my ankle, so I spun and stabbed his forearm right to the fucking bone! I then punched the shrieking cunt in his stupid face! But he caught my knife hand, until I elbowed him in the fucking throat! He gagged, clutching his neck with both hands, and revealed his 9mm under his left armpit. I removed the gun like plucking a hot coal from a bonfire. With adrenaline playing a drum roll inside my chest, I proceeded to kick the living shit out of that giant's balls! I stomped that cunt one final time with a boot to the face! Always kick them hardest while they're down!

With no more fucking around, I climbed into that nice new car. Okay, I don't actually have a driver's license. I know, I know. I'm thirty-four and I still can't drive a car. No, I can fucking drive! Just not legally. Or with any great skill. But in this kind of situation, I wasn't about to say no to a free BMW. And Bob's your uncle. Off I drove.

Next priority, work out how to play music on the stereo. And what's the first song I came across on the radio, Metallica, *Don't Tread On Me*.

I was fucking glad that I took the car, because it was about thirty minutes driving time before I actually found any signs of civilization. Fuck having to walk that distance. By that time the sky was beginning to lighten up, and I drove into a small town. But where the fuck was a police station when you fucking needed one? I couldn't find any cops, so I kept driving. More black roads through a blackened country.

Eventually, I ended up in a place called Boxberg, near a lake, and finally I stumbled into a tiny police station. It wasn't long before I was in a doctor's

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office getting the nail in my ribs removed, and then I was driven back to Berlin. The whole time, I was lingering on that skinny hooker with her pouting lips. I'm telling you, it was all worth it just for that one blowjob. Hell, they could crucify me all night long if only I could sodomize that bitch the next time.

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So that's how I ended up in hospital. The cops later informed me that these gangsters weren't even Russian. Most likely from Slovakia. Fuck it, it all sounds like the same ridiculous gibberish to me. When the cops asked me how I had managed to overcome the giant that came back to deal with me? I put it like this, "I just thought of what I'd like to do to my ex."

Bruce



SHORT STORY 3
2013
THE SMALL HOURS

DISCLAIMER:

This is a true story. As true as my subjective bias can recall it.

Inevitably, my sleep patterns have become shit again. Staying up later and later, until now I seem to suffer from a constant state of jet-lag. Summer finally arrived but the days have only shortened for me. Leaving me trapped in an endless dream-state that spills into my consciousness. But my dreams have become a mere mockery of my real life. It's all a fucking joke. A real bad fucking joke. And I have no proof but my memories. So, I'll write it all down before the naysayers put me in their shoes. Yet they weren't fucking there. So here, try on my Chuck Taylors for size.

Okay. Let's put this in context. I finished the third draft of Part 1 of my book *Bark*, on the last day of April, so I felt the need for a few days break to clear my head from all that demented shit that I've been working on. Yeah, like that's going to happen. This will never end.

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Wednesday, May the 1st, came with a huge party on the streets of Berlin, which was pretty much just music festival. I didn't see any political agenda on display for this supposed May-day. You rebels-without-a-reason are getting slacker every year. It was only about hanging out in the sun with friends, and then sex until we were soaking.

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Thursday, May the 2nd, came with the death of Jeff Hanneman from Slayer. Death is the best reminder to appreciate life. But what life do I really have to give a shit about?

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Friday, May the 3rd, and a cute blonde from Hamburg wasted my fucking time, teasing me with her lies about how much she wanted to model for my art. Always with the: maybe, maybe, maybe. She sent photos posing in her underwear just to show off the shape of her hips – which were excellent. But she's another waste of my fucking time! Females fall into two categories. 1, they jump at an opportunity spontaneously. 2, they hum and har, and say maybe, maybe, maybe, but they never actually do. I'm too intolerant for these professional fucking procrastinators. After all, there's always more meat in

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the market. Always!

-

Saturday, May the 4th, and I found a cheap plastic, scary mask in a costume shop. I couldn't stop laughing at how fucked-up I looked in the mirror. It's fucking terrific! So, I wore it to the birthday of a burlesque performer from Hamburg. Naturally the shots began to flow, while some chick wearing a horse mask rode the birthday girl like she was a wild bull. There was another performance from a friend dressed like a male blow-up doll, and then with a KA-BOOM, his fully erect hard-on fired a fuck-load of glitter all over the birthday girl's face! Later, an ex gave me shit for texting girls in front of her, even though she'd been telling sleep-over stories about guys with small dicks. I smiled, called her a 'paranoid whore', and then pulled on my scary mask as I simply walked away into the small hours toward another party in Mitte.

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Sunday, May the 5th, was a Mad-Hatter-themed birthday party for a dominatrix friend in a small garden south of Berlin. Another sunny Sunday with the usual-suspects all looking as one would expect after a Saturday night of drugs, drink, and other incestuous debauchery – plus funky hats! Later, I headed to a movie night at friend's place, as another girl text me, saying she finally decided that she really wanted to model for my art. Third time lucky.

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Monday, May the 6th, was when I spent all day animating the trailer for *Bark*. By 'all day', I meant all day and night, and I didn't stop until the birds were fucking annoying me outside my window.

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Tuesday, May the 7th, a friend suddenly wanted to take psychotic naked photos with me after she had become inspired from some retarded internet meme. I said why the fuck not. And my scary mask looked exactly how I felt: hungry for lunacy!

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Wednesday, May the 8th, was the La Fête Fatale #12. I dressed as Major Obnoxious, the big fat pig in a tux, and did my dirty work: grabbing tits and ass, and getting the fucking party started! Everyone loves a dancing pig. Ah, the flesh of so many pretty girls. Once the performances were done, I crawled out of my sauna of a pig suit, grabbed my scary mask, and then danced the fucking morning away.

-

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Thursday, May the 9th, I woke up at god knows what time in the afternoon. I fucking hate giggling children outside in the sun while I'm trying to sleep myself to fucking death! Eventually, I dragged my ass out for coffee with friends. Then, later at home, I Skype-fucked a new friend in Munich until we were both hot and sticky. The internet, it's a hell of a drug!

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Friday, May the 10th, I rose just in time to see the sun go down, and then met an ex at the Strychnin Gallery for a new exhibition of creepy porcelain dolls. Afterward, while on our way to Kreuzberg for another birthday, I was laughing so hard at a joke that I literally vomited cola out my nose! At the bar, I followed the birthday boy into the corner of a crowded room where I stopped and frowned as he opened a cupboard and crawled inside... What the fuck? There was a hidden staircase within the cupboard leading down to their secret basement party. I met loads of Italians fresh off the fucking boat down there. Some Russian guy befriended my ex, as naturally, he spoke eight fucking languages fluently – and he sounded like a fag in every fucking tongue! Leaning over, he said what a shame it was that I wasn't queer too. He laughed while undressing me with his beady little eyes. That night, I noticed that my ex was wearing my lion-skull engagement ring (the one that I had custom made for another ex back in 2006), so I slipped it on again. Other douchebags were lighting their vodka-breath on fire, so I scaled the narrow stairs to a sofa in the main bar, where two beautiful French kids had just begun a super-serious conversation about tedious technology. I sat in silence unable to tune out their voices, until the skinny chick abruptly asked what I thought about the topic. The boy quickly leaned over, as he added, "Are you political?"

By 4am, I ended up walking toward my doorstep, where yet another ex was waiting in the shadows. Waiting for me.

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Saturday, May 11th, I woke up and found my ex texting someone else in my bed, but sweet Jesus, was I horny! So, I fucked her something brutal! She left, and I lay there wondering how much more I needed to do in order to reach the total destruction of empathy? The internet later told me about a release party at the Babylon theater that night. So, I put on my dress shoes, a clean white shirt, black vest, jacket, and tie; and I soon found myself among my drag queen and artist friends. It started to rain before the film, yet I lingered outside, introducing myself to a cute journalist who was waiting for her photographer. How I keep running into gorgeous women seems to

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be the way the universe works. What can I say, I'm fucking charming! The screening turned out to be a documentary about trashy, hard-core, burlesque performers. Afterward, I went for drinks with the organizers, and soon was chatting up an Italian dancer. Once again, I didn't get to sleep until the sun came up.

Sunday, May 12th, I was invited to a Polish art-porn exhibition by a new fan of my work. Later, I got a message from a girl canceling our Earl Grey date, but another text said that I was on the guest-list for the Sepultura gig that night at SO36. Right after the gig, my last ex sent a message, saying that she really needed to confess that she had just fucked my gym-buddy... I wrote back to her, "You're only human."

Am I the devil?

Is the devil the ultimate humanist?

Humans are meat: worthless but fucking tasty!

Midnight came, and I slipped back into my dress shoes, walked out into the small hours, and strolled up to the Primitive bar. I was too late for the Sunday Soirée, but I had a drink while reflecting over the last few weeks as the bar slowly emptied out. There is no conclusion, there is only continuation. After all my work, all my art, all my experiences, all I have learned, and all I have failed; all I really am, in a holistic sense, is just a miserable son of a bitch in a black jacket and hoody. I saw nothing but random chaos and bullshit, so I started texting girls in other cities. I loathed the very notion of tomorrow. And then one girl texted back, telling me to go to sleep. I smirked bitterly and walked away.

Plugging in my headphones, I listened to Nick Cave And The Bad Seeds, *We Real Cool*, and headed down Revaler Strasse. Under low hanging trees, I went toward the train tracks, where I watched some guy walking his dog in the sheer dark of an empty lot. Emerging from the trees, I found myself face to face with the so-called 'gentrification' of Friedrichshain. That's a fucking word I'd never even heard of until a month ago, but now I fucking hear it everywhere. Even the other day, I saw graffiti on a wall saying, "*Fuck gentrification!*" The word was haunting me. Personally, I couldn't care less about what's happening to the city. It's the natural evolution of any town. And these fucks in Berlin should already know that this place is in a constant state of flux! Stop acting so fucking surprised!

I felt my phone buzz in my jacket pocket. I ignored it. And then I spotted someone else walking down this lonely street littered with heavy construction

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equipment. A girl. I wanted to look away in disgust, yet I just kept on glaring straight at her distant high heels and shapely legs beneath a billowing dress. I glared right through her silhouette and deep into her flesh with all those subtle movements of breasts below her long, loose hair that was barely lit from a golden lamp. While scowling at her, my fists slowly clenched as thoughts crept violently into my spine.

Am I Bark?

I stopped dead in my tracks.

She stepped into the light, and I instantly recognized that shy face.

Popping out my headphones, I tilted my head, "Mara?"

She leaned in to give me a soft hug. "Bruce, what are you doing out past your bed time?"

"So much for your theory about no physical contact," I replied, stepping back.

She grinned bashfully.

I stared at the meat on her bones.

I've known this dear little Russian Jew for some years now, two or three, but not really. Mara Hershlag was one of those girls who faded into the wallpaper. You could easily mistake her for a small-town librarian. That's about all the attention I gave her. Just a friend of a friend who perpetually looked like she was about give a speech in front of a thousand gang-rapists in a maximum-security prison while she only wore a wet paper-napkin. Anyway, I'm not really sure why I suddenly noticed her last year. Oh, wait. It was her shoes! That's right, she wore some fucking excellent heels. For a mumbling wee thing, she had great taste in stilettos, I'll give her that much. I believe it was at the last Thanks Giving party that I spotted a pair of Prada, and soon my eyes were led upward and astray. Suddenly my brain was deconstructing the very fabric of her blouse and visualizing the curve of her breasts in that congenial atmosphere. She smiled and looked down. Then looked back into my eyes. I turned away and laughed with my friends, and I refused to acknowledge her helpless act. For it is an act! She's a fucking female after all. Yet before she left that night, I suggested that we get a cup of tea someday. I'd never deny the fact that I was attracted to her, I am a fucking male after all! So that weekend we went for drinks. And as the months slowly passed, I began to learn tiny details about her. But the more I learned, the more I had to remind myself that she was a fucking waste of my fucking time. But why was I being such a judgmental asshole to this nice little girl? Well, what did I know about Mara? That she liked nothing more than being alone, she didn't

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‘date’ – not even the internet-millionaires that her friends tried to hook her up with, and apparently, she didn’t like being ‘touched’ by anyone.

“So, you’re a big fat fucking liar,” I said. “Or did I just hallucinate that hug?”

“Yes, Bruce, it’s just a dream,” Mara smiled, as we stood in that deserted street with an S-bahn train gently creeping by.

“I heard that if you concentrate on the back of your hands during a dream, you should be able to control it,” I smirked, glancing at my tattooed hand. “So why are you still wearing that dress?”

“I’m not...,” she replied. “You just have a poor imagination.”

“It’s true.” And I stared blatantly at her breasts – and then she opened her tiny jacket, exposing her cleavage! I slowly cocked an eyebrow at her teasing posture. But then I remembered all the months of excuses that she would come up with, blowing me off every single time that I invited her out to any-fucking-thing at all. I had come to the conclusion long ago that she clearly wasn’t into me. So, I looked away, not interested in wasting another minute on her, and began to walk off.

“Where are you going?” Mara chirped up.

“What do you care?” I sneered, not looking back, until I found her strutting up next to me. “Don’t you have to get home for your early work day tomorrow?” I asked, as I caught a whiff of her perfume. The smell went straight to my adrenal gland, if you know what I mean.

“Come with me,” was all she said, as she suddenly moved ahead and waved down a passing taxi. “Let’s go for a ride.”

It wasn’t a question.

What the fuck, and I climbed into the cab. She told the driver the address, and we were off.

Sitting there in a foul mood, I gazed out the right-hand-side window, having a flashback of when I was seventeen, on late night drives with my best friends. Back when I wanted to do anything but go home. Anything at all. I always liked sitting in the back seat, staring out the window as the night streets blurred on by. But how many times have I been here before. I remember when I was twenty-nine, sitting in a taxi heading to girl’s place so that I could fuck her in her sister’s bed. Then I was thirty-three, in a cab in Edinburgh with another lover next to me. Then I was thirty-four, and on a road-trip to Rostock with another affair. But now I was thirty-five, and still staring out the window with the cool glass next to my temple. Yet I didn’t really know this particular female. A meek little biped. I glanced at her knees,

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as we drove into Hackescher Markt. I didn't know where exactly, didn't care. All I knew was as soon as she annoyed me, I was going to leaving her fucking ass on the curb.

Stepping onto the footpath, I looked up at your average modern, inner-city apartment building. Speaking of fucking gentrification, Hackescher Markt was the perfect example. But Christ, listen to me. I'm almost starting to sound like I know what the fuck I'm talking about. Let's put the record straight however, after eight years in Berlin, I know precisely Jack-shit. The more I learn, the more I realize how I don't know anything. My mood was a tar pit, and then I suddenly wondered if I really was okay about my ex screwing my friend yesterday. Fuck it. We're all sluts in this town. Everyone was fucking everyone! It's that simple. Ideas of attachment of any form were obsolete. Suffering was pointless, just like emotional justifications for relationships. It was all so fucking rotten to the core that I wanted to see this whole fucking place burn like it was 1945 all over again. Flatten this new Sodom! I was no exception! I'm just as guilty as all of you self-centered fucks! Can you smell all that fucking adultery in the rancid air tonight!

Oh, but wait. As the taxi pulled away, I turned and found it was only Mara standing there. So, let me put my erection away.

"Come on then," she said, marching down a narrow side street without hesitation.

I glanced irritated at the departing taxi. Why did we get out of the cab just to keep walking? Cracking my neck from side to side, I pondered taking a bus to Tegel airport for a Starbucks milk-saturated latte. Unfortunately, though, I'm weak for girls with soft voices – and I looked skyward. God, why haven't you turned me into salt already? Watching Mara's heels walk away, I instantly became a fish on a hook. It's unconscious and uncontrollable, that whole wonderful mystery of attraction. But at the same time, I fucking hated every-fucking-thing! My rational mind was screaming at me like Zack de la Rocha, don't fucking follow her! Yet my legs were already pursuing. I wanted to put a fucking chisel through my own nasal cavity! Idiot!

But fuck it.

Let's see where this is going.

Where the fuck is she going?!

Pulling out my smartphone, I found a message from my Baptist friend, "*Keep it strong brother, a good amount of us are going through dark times.*"

How appropriate.

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When I looked up, I realized I was completely alone.

Where the fuck had Mara vanish to?

“What’s that?” Mara asked from behind. She was standing in the entrance to an old building with a tall metal gate, her finger pointing to the scary mask hanging off the back of my belt. Whipping the mask over my head, I pulled my hood up, and then turned to face her. Mara giggled, and I grunted like a fiend as she stepped up close. She was short, but I was on the street and she stood in heels on the curb. Standing right in front of me, she stared into my eyes behind the mask. And we did nothing. Just stood there. Staring at each other. For the longest time in the dead-empty, dead-center of Berlin.

Then I was filled with repulsion as memories of her depressions, excuses, and insecurities flooded my frontal lobes; and I whispered, “Are you drunk?”

“You know I’m not,” she replied, and then crossed the street to another modern minimalist masterpiece of vague stainless architecture. Thumbing a code on the gate, she led me down a side path and around a corner behind the building. Finally, we came to a small staircase above what looked like the entrance to a basement. She tapped at another combination-lock, as I raised my phone and took a photo of her. Shocked, she spun around mortified! She never liked her picture being taken – and that’s exactly why I took it. She snatched my phone without a word and deleted the pic. I flicked her the bird with my growing impatience, so in return, she snapped a photo of me while she poked out her tongue. Holding onto my phone, she then pushed open the heavy door with her ass. Goddamn it, that was frustrating!

What the fuck was I doing here?! Though, what the fuck else should I be doing? This was the path of least resistance. I just needed to accept the fact that Mara was as a-sexual as a coffee table. However, I began hoping that she was meeting some of her hot Jewish friends here. But we were in a fucking basement! Ducking my head under the low ceiling packed with pipes, I smiled at another idea, that maybe Mara was in fact a psychopath. The more I thought about it, the more it really made total sense. All of her anti-social behavior and the hints that she had made about her past indiscretions added up to her being a real-life psycho-murderer. However, that would make me the one playing the part of the stupid helpless victim that she had brought willingly into her dungeon of doom! Jesus fuck! Think about it! We met randomly on the street this evening. No one knew I was with her. The taxi even dropped us off on a different street. Holy fucking shit, was I about to get sliced and diced! About fucking time! We all knew it was coming sooner or later. But I never thought Mara would be the one to chop my head off with a

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rusty ax.

A light then came on from another staircase, and Mara headed up and out of the basement. So much for that demented scenario. Yet another idea then crossed my mind. The fact remains: no one knew that I was with her. And I actually had a fucking knife!

Upon leaving the basement, I was blinded by the neon white of a pristine foyer. I kept my mask on as I entered an open elevator. Mara was standing coyly in the corner of the lift where she handed back my phone before we reached the top floor.

I was staring at my reflection in a mirror as we walked down a dark corridor. That hideous mask suited me much better than my face did. Mara moved quietly ahead and pulled out a set of keys in front of the last door. I casually strolled into a large unlit apartment and went straight to the huge balcony overlooking the roof tops. Suddenly I heard music. Soft but familiar. It was Fever Ray, *If I Had A Heart*. I remained by the big windows until I felt hands reaching around from behind me. Slowly, Mara's small fingers moved up and under my jacket. Her palms slipping beneath my shirt and across my warm chest. I found myself holding my breath under my mask. Her head rested against my back, and she held on. I didn't do anything. Didn't say anything. We both just listened to the music.

Eventually, she pulled away.

Turning, I grabbed her hand.

She resisted, "Don't."

I held her hand for another moment, but she refused to look at me. Fuck this shit! So, I let her go and I walked away, looking for the bathroom in this unknown penthouse.

Washing my hands after I took a piss, I paused on my reflection again. Wearing ugly masks came fucking easy to me. So, I left it on, and kept my defenses up while in the presence of that passive-aggressive bitch.

Stepping out of the brightly lit bathroom, I discovered voices in the lounge. Two unidentified men in expensive business suits suddenly rose to their feet as I marched toward them – and instantly everything changed. They both started yelling at Mara! I had no idea what language they were shouting, at a guess, it was Hebrew? One of the chumps then charged toward me! So, I stepped up, and he immediately stopped once he realized how much taller I was. Mara was trying to keep calm and explain something, but these two fuckheads didn't seem to be buying it. After all my time in Europe, I've become pretty good at judging what people are on about in other languages

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just from watching their gestures and listening to their tone of voice. These guys were not amused. The loudest one then did something that I couldn't see, but Mara lunged at him! I was shocked when she flipped this guy right over her shoulder and slammed his entire body weight down upon the unforgiving floor!

Da fuck?!

The second guy grabbed my collar and pinned me against a wall while pulling out a fucking handgun from his jacket! Before I knew what the fuck was happening, Mara put this second guy in an arm-lock, and then smashed his head into the fucking wall!

Stumbling back, I was as confused as a constipated monkey with shit for brains. Then I saw the first guy shaking his head as he got to his hands and knees. So, I grabbed a foot-tall miniature of the Eiffel Tower and beat that cunt back down to the floor!

Mara also had the second shithhead face-down and she was kneeling on the back of his neck. There she immediately tied his suit jacket about his wrists.

Stepping sideways, I took a moment and looked over the bloody Eiffel Tower in my hands. Mara then grabbed my arm and we ran out of that pretty apartment. We hurried down a stairwell, into an underground parking lot, and then Mara drove gently into the empty streets. I had no idea whose car we were in.

Looking around the Bentley's dashboard, I then examined the miniature Eiffel Tower still clenched in my hand. Mara however, didn't seem to have even registered what had just happened. Stopping at a red light, I opened my passenger-side door, when Mara grabbed my shoulder!

"Just getting rid of the evidence," I stated, holding up my bloody weapon. I dumped it in a random trash can on the side of the street, and then off we drove. "Seriously though, Mara... Are you Batman?"

"No!" she was horrified by the idea. "Capes are totally gay!"

I paused, staring at her smooth thighs as she drove through town. I was fascinated by her hands on the steering wheel and her long brown hair over her little tits. "Who the fuck are you?"

"Bruce..." she quietly replied, dead serious, "I'm Batman."

I couldn't help cracking up with laughter, as we pulled into a private driveway leading toward a huge mansion. I think we were somewhere just north of Hauptbahnhof. Slowly chuckling away to myself, I watched as Mara parked in front of the wide front steps below those classic renaissance double doors. There, I figured to go with the flow. It was Mara however, who oddly

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suggested that I keep the mask on, so I did.

She rang the doorbell, as I glanced around that courtyard full of Mercedes, BMW, and Rolls-Royce automobiles. The doors soon swung open just as Mara quickly hooked her arm around my left elbow. Oh, now we're dating? So much for her no-touching policy. A short, fat butler greeted us in Hebrew? I really don't know what Hebrew sounds like, but I assumed she only knows: English, German, Russian, and Hebrew. Only. Ha! I'm such an uneducated fuck.

We were led through that massive place of marble floors and museum-like works of art on the towering walls, until we found ourselves in a warm lounge. Leather sofas, crystal chandeliers, and about a dozen ladies and gentlemen were seated rigidly about the room, sipping on wine and smoking cigarettes. There was a moment before the polite conversation suddenly ended once they spotted us, and a real fucking tense silence took over. You could almost hear a high-pitched ring that slowly built up like feed-back. So, I abruptly raised my hand and waved excitedly at the gathering, "Hi, guys! How the fuck are you all doing this evening?"

Abandoning Mara, I strolled over to a sofa and sat next to some gorgeous chick in a skin tight, black evening dress.

Glaring at her through my scary mask, I watched that uptight female glance away as I leaned in closer and whispered, "Love your skin."

The conversation started up only after a servant offered me a slender glass of something bubbly. Before I got a chance to ask if they had any Mountain Dew, Mara dragged me after her. She was being led by another old chap in a tux. I saluted farewell to those perturbed guests and blew a kiss at the girl on the sofa, as we disappeared into a private study.

There was a stuffed panther in a corner of the room next to a gigantic fireplace. Mara and the old guy nattered on about Christ knows what, while I moved over to the panther with its dead snout caught in a frozen sneer. Leaning against the wall, I was staring out a window as I stroked the panther's head, wondering if there were any other hot girls around.

"What do you think you're doing?" Mara then asked.

As the old guy stepped out another door, I seized the opportunity, and jumped on the back of the panther, pretending to ride that sucker like I was at a fucking rodeo. "Yeeeeeeeeeeeeeee-har, motherfucker!"

"Stop it!" Mara demanded. "What the fuck is wrong with you?! Get off it, now!"

"Or you'll go all ninja-assassin on my ass?" I asked, pointing both my

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index fingers at her while rubbing my ass against the panther's smooth back.

"No, but they might stuff you in a sack and deport you to a prison in Libya where you'll get your teeth ripped out long before they even start on your fingernails."

"Well, shit. If you're trying to scare me, you could have just shown me your tits," I immediately fired back, "Or lack of them."

She actually looked hurt – until another two guys in suits entered. Both stared in disgust at what I was doing on the panther... Slowly standing up, I cleared my throat and straightened my jacket – when suddenly the door behind me burst open and I was grabbed! Mara screamed something, but I was distracted by the two huge fucks pulling me out the door. Guess they really did love that panther. Then I was slammed against a wall and punched in my gut by what felt like a fucking bowling ball! Dropping to the floor, I gagged for breath under my steamed-up mask. Those two pricks though, just grabbed my arms and hauled me upstairs.

There, they threw me into another room. Coughing and gasping, I rolled onto my back as I heard the door being locked. Sons of a bitches. Crawling over to the wall, I realized that I was in some plush bedroom. As I stood and stared out the window at the city lights, I had to repeat the question, what the fuck was I doing here? But instead of an answer, I recalled sitting on the rooftop at the studio in Tokyo, back when I was twenty, while listening to Kyuss, *Space Cadet*. Those little moments of isolation kept returning over the years. Times when you find yourself utterly alone and your only friend is a song. Music: one of the few virtues of mankind.

And then gunshots!

Flinching, I grabbed a lamp. Tearing the cable from the wall, I held that fucker like a baseball bat as I faced the bedroom door.

Screams. Running footsteps. Another gunshot!

And then a fucking helicopter came down outside the window!

Suddenly I was struck by how oblivious I had been to this obvious escape route. I may have been locked in the room, but I used the lamp and bashed out the fucking glass! The grass was spongy as I jumped from the first floor, and landed with a roll, just as the chopper curved around to the back of the building where it touched down in the blackened gardens. Dusting myself off, I glanced toward the parking lot and walked away. Fuck this shit!

Leisurely strolling with my hands in my pants pockets and mask still covering my bitter face, I passed all those polished luxury cars – right when I received a text message. Pulling out my phone, I saw it was from Mara. It

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just said, “Sorry.”

I stopped. That fucking bitch! I looked back at the stone mansion. Cunt! This was that moment in all those movies that I hate, where you’re screaming at the fucking idiot to just walk away! Walk the fuck away! Christ, that’s what I’m fucking good at! Keep it up! Just walk away, for fuck’s sake!

But rational logic is always hostage to temperamental bullshit.

So reluctantly, I slowly headed back toward that fucking helicopter. But why, Bruce, why would you return? Because I always love regretting the stupid shit that I get up to. It’s far better than regretting the crap that I didn’t do. My ex-girlfriends know exactly what the fuck I’m talking about.

The chopper was powering down, and several guys in suits had come to the back patio where huge windows from a ball room lit the garden.

Quick decision: I whipped off my jacket, hoody, and mask. Pulled my jacket back on and buttoned my black shirt all the way up. I then stuffed my hoody and mask under a bush before subtly hurrying over to the guys entering the ball room. No one knew who I was. It was easy to act like I belonged there. And it worked. It’s hilarious how people will let you walk into restricted areas as long as you have a serious expression and look like you’re on a fucking mission. Don’t bother me, man, Jesus sent me here to poke your fucking daughters in the ass! So I walked behind this group of four guys and entered a room full of rich-looking fucks. The hosts thought I was with the new arrivals, and they assumed I was with the hosts. But shit, now that I was back in there, what the fuck was I really going to do?

I heard a door slam in another room, and I gazed over all those snobbish fags – until I noticed that chick in the black evening dress again. She looked straight back at me, but this time she smiled at my human face. That’s the Bruce-charm, baby.

Slipping into a corridor, I heard men yelling and a muffled noise that sounded familiar. Just then I saw those same two apes that had dragged me upstairs, now carrying Mara away. I pulled out my phone and pretended like I was quietly talking to someone. Giving the two thugs some space, I waited near the front doors before I followed them up the stairs.

As I made my way along the upstairs corridor, a door opened and out came this fucking goddess! Tight navy-blue skirt, blouse, heels, and long black hair with milky skin that was just begging for a licking. She looked up from under a long fringe, and instantly I forgot everything else. Sorry, Mara, but I was never a nice guy. Walking slowly up to this woman in her early twenties, I watched her eyes closely as she began circling me like we were

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about to tango. Saying something in Hebrew, she looked me up and down, while I focused on her swollen tits tightly packed into that push-up bra. Of course, I didn't say anything. She could have been asking for the time, or for the password, or whether I wanted to cum in her mouth. I let the sexual tension thicken as we stepped even closer. My hand slipped around to the small of her back as I smelled her hair while staring into her dilated pupils. Again, she whispered something, and my pants grew tighter – but then I heard Mara cry out down the hall! Yet I didn't care in the slightest. I had both of my hands on this chick's hips, and I was steadily moving down to her ass – when footsteps came along that fucking hallway. She smoothly pulled away and continued gliding down the stairs with a smirk. I watched her go even after some guy put his hand on my shoulder. I didn't pay him any attention as he muttered something before he also headed down the stairs. Backing away, I turned a corner and found one of those big cunts standing guard in front of a door. He spotted me coming, and I glared straight back, remembering that sucker-punch to my stomach. However, the guy quickly opened the very door he was guarding and waited for me to enter. I couldn't help the feeling that this shit was a set-up. Who was it that he thought I was exactly?

Anyway, I stepped into this new bedroom and found Mara lying face-down with her wrists and ankles tied together. The door closed behind, as I approached the incapacitated girl. She didn't move or say a word – not until she heard my phone 'snap' a photo of her!

“Bruce?!”

“You can call me Uncle Fingers,” I grinned, crouching down.

She seriously looked like she had just seen a ghost.

“This some kind of bondage-fantasy, role-play game that I've accidentally walked in on here?” I asked, admiring the view. “I can leave you be if you want?”

“Bruce!”

Why do girls only ever say my name when they're pissed with me, and never while I fuck them?

“Get me out of these, now!” she hissed under her breath.

I stood up and rubbed my chin. “Gee, I don't know. I like you, but I don't want to break your rule of no-touching.”

“Bruce!” She really wasn't in the mood.

“I know... This is some kind of scat-party, isn't it?”

“This isn't funny.”

“You want me to leave? 'Cause I can do that. I owe you nothing. You're

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barely a fucking friend. I can walk out the same way I came in, and not a single fuck was given.”

“Bruce, please.”

“Please?” I frowned. “Okay, how about this. I cut you free and you continue being little Miss Excuses, and I’ll ask no questions... But... I finally get to take you out on a real date sometime.”

“I can’t believe that’s all you’re interested at a time like this?”

“A time like what? I don’t know what the fuck you people are up to, and I don’t really give two shits. But a slice of your ass, that’s something tangible. That’s as good as this fucking life gets. Remember kid, you brought me here.”

She said nothing.

“Typical...” And I pulled out my Gerber multi-tool from the back of my belt and used the pliers to cut the plastic restraints. Once she got to her feet, Mara grabbed my left hand, twisting my fingers back into an agonizing position! For a tiny little creature, she sure was brutal. Clenching my jaw, we eye-fucked each other for a moment before she released my hand. While I shook the pain out of my wrist, Mara sprung open the door and brought the giant guard down to his fucking knees! She struck him in the throat, and he choked, until she cracked his skull against the corner of the door frame! I glanced at my sensitive artist hand and realized that had I gotten off easy. I guess I really shouldn’t piss her off too much. And then out of the room she went, and I followed – after kicking that unconscious fat cunt in his gut one last time.

Down another staircase we went into a corridor where Mara soon opened a door onto the back garden – when gunfire echoed out! Automatic weapons from the front of the building. Mara grabbed my arm and we sprinted for the chopper. But half-way there, I yanked myself free and grabbed my hoody and mask from under the bushes. All hell seemed to have broken loose in the ball room where machine-guns were being handed out – and then the very fucking foundations shook as an explosion tore up the night from the parking lot at the front of the estate!

This decadent place had somehow turned into a fucking war zone. Looking at my black hoody, I wished I had a bullet-proof vest instead. Then I saw two men in suits running toward the chopper ahead of me. Mara shot them both in the legs! Where the fuck did she get a gun from?! The blades of the helicopter began spinning as I discovered Mara in the cockpit, “You can fly this fucking thing? Ain’t you just a gem!”

Mara then pointed her handgun right at me – and shot some fuck coming

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up behind, “Gems are cheap. I however, am not!”

“I don’t doubt it,” I said to myself, climbing into the back of the chopper, as gunfire shredded the mansion.

More men came running toward us, but Mara shot one dipshit, and the rest of them scattered like cockroaches.

We lifted off as men in suits with machine-guns swarmed around the compound. I didn’t know who was with whom at that fuck-up of a slaughterhouse cocktail party. But then the chopper rattled as bullets nailed the underbelly! Mara pulled away, and I was thrown like I weighed nothing! I grabbed a seat-belt just as the side door slid open and I nearly fell the fuck out. But we were off into the open night sky – while my ass clenched so tight that I couldn’t shit an atom for all the money in the fucking world. But still, we were free, so I tried to relax. Not for long.

“Hold on to something. Hydraulics are dead. We’re going down,” Mara calmly called back, sounding as if she was merely announcing that she was about to take a nap.

Outside it all looked black as fuck from what I could see. But suddenly we hit trees, and before I could swallow my balls again, we slammed into the fucking ground! One great big impact and that was it!

I shook my head and grinned, “Well, that wasn’t so bad.”

“Run!” Mara stressed.

I then realized we were on fire!

Leaping out into the random parking lot that we had crashed into, Mara and I didn’t get far before the whole fucking chopper exploded! I swear to god; a rotor blade barely missed our fucking heads before impaling a concrete wall!

“FUCK!” I yelled at the burning carcass of our flying machine.

Mara wasted no time waving down a passing car and extracting the driver at gunpoint. We were out of there just as quickly as we had touched down.

“This evening’s going just swimmingly,” I remarked, pulling on my hoody. “So how long have you been doing this whole espionage racket?”

Out of nowhere a black SUV slammed into the side of our car! Then a second four-wheel-drive came from the other side! Well, what would this adventure be without a high-speed car chase? It’s times like these that I’m glad that I wear my seat belt, because Mara hit the brakes, and the two SUV’s shot past. She immediately reversed the fuck up and raced down another street. I didn’t know where the fuck we were. I think heading toward Prenzlauer Berg. Those two SUV’s wouldn’t quit though. I held on by the skin of my teeth as

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we zipped between other traffic at break-neck speed. And let me tell you, my asshole clenched tighter still! I glanced at Mara, but she looked totally disconnected, like she was simply brushing her hair before bed. She then ripped up the hand-break, and we skid around a corner, and my testicles were suddenly in my lungs!

Then cops!

Flashing lights and shrieking sirens came from behind!

And then gunfire again!

I grabbed the dashboard as we headed right into on-coming traffic and a fucking bus plowing straight toward us! I have no clue how Mara avoided that imminent collision, but the cops didn't! The bus buckled as shattered glass flew everywhere behind our tidy escape! Then we were charging down the footpath. Some guy walking his poodle lunged out of the way, the dog was pissing through mid-air! We drove out onto the tram tracks with an SUV right on our ass. Then a flood of blue sirens burst out from the side streets! Cops by the dozen! The SUV rammed the back of our vehicle again, and again Mara just shook her head as if a silly little mosquito was bugging her. And then, hello, a fucking tram was coming! Fuck me! Yet Mara kept on going. I looked back and forth between her and the tram. Was this really the time for a game of chicken? I think at this point my asshole was so tight, that the skin had sealed over and I no longer had a rectum anymore. But then, like a bolt of lightning, Mara whipped us off the tracks. Skidding around, we sped down another narrow street! I saw the SUV clip the tram but managed to follow us with the growing numbers of cop cars.

"So, we're heading to your embassy, right?" I suggested.

"Actually, I don't work for the embassy," Mara admitted.

"Wow." I shook my head. "Just wow. You're a real professional liar, ain't you. Wow. Have you ever said a single thing true since we first met? Don't tell me your real name's not even Batman?"

"Words are an imperfect form of communication," she smiled.

"Yes. Yes, they are," I solemnly agreed, when suddenly we screamed around into another skid, while Mara stretched her left arm out of her window, aimed, and shot the driver of the SUV at pointblank range! That large black vehicle twisted and flipped! A churning ball of demolished metal bashed through parked cars, completely destroying itself and ultimately blocking the entire fucking street behind us!

Nice.

Mara drove casually down quiet side streets like all was well.

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We quickly parallel-parked, ran a block and stole another random car. And we were off before the cops could ever locate us.

Next thing I knew, we were in Mitte, and then walking into the Hilton hotel. I guess I was finally in a slight state of shock, because I didn't say anything anymore. Mara led the way to a room, where I slumped into a big brown armchair in that five-star suite while trying to count the number of times I could have literally died this evening. But then Mara walked over and straddled me. She grabbed my head and we suddenly started kissing like long-time lovers from way back! Jesus, let me catch my fucking breath! Shoving her back, I sneered as she clamped one hand around my throat and slammed the barrel of her gun against my forehead! I sat still. There I studied Mara closely. No longer was she the timid, hushed little nobody in the background. Now she was burning with violent fucking intensity. Her eyes were fucking beautiful with a deranged sort of rage as she squeezed my throat and pushed the gun harder against my skull. Slowly sitting up, I put my hands on her back, pulling her close. Her face was right in front of mine. Her hand crushing my throat as we stared viciously at each other. Slowly I licked her top lip. She pushed me away, so I pulled her back down, pressing her mouth into mine. Our lips opened wide as her long hair covered me. My hands ran down to her ass and under her dress. Her palms lay on either side of my face. The gun had simply disappeared. I stood and picked Mara up while we made a meal out of each other. And then I slammed her back against a wall! Pinning her there with her legs wrapped around my hips, I sunk a hand into her bra, cupping a breast, and in turn she dug a hand straight down into my pants.

I turned and lay her on the bed. Shoving her higher up, I crawled between her legs, licking her neck. Suddenly she shoved me aside as she sat and walked away.

Rolling my jaw, I watched her head toward the bathroom – then I attacked! Grabbing her, I hammered her back against the bathroom door! She moved like she was about to stop me, like what she had done to all those hired killers – but she didn't do anything once I kissed her long and hard. I spun her around, and she pushed her ass back into my crotch until it was my back against the wall. Kissing her throat, my right hand went between her legs while my left moved to her tits. Grinding her ass against my erection, she rubbed herself slow and strong into my body. She felt good in my hands. Warm and delicious. Her breathing was deep and fast. Her eyes clenched as I sucked on her earlobe, and then my fingers slid into her panties and lower still. She gasped and held still. And my middle fingertip rubbed her clit in

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small circles. Over and over, before my fingers slipped deeper and inside.

She pulled away, just to turn and kiss me as she ripped my belt open. Watching her drop to her knees, I grabbed the wall. Without hesitation, she sucked impatiently on my hard-on, causing every muscle in my body to tense up! My hands slowly stroked the crown of her head while she sucked glacially-slow. She was fucking beautiful!

I pulled her up and we kiss while tearing at each other's clothes, until we reached a big sofa. Turning her around, I positioned her on the cushions as I got behind and whipped up her pretty dress. Grabbing her stockings and panties, I yanked them half-way down her thighs in one movement, exposing that ripe ass! I sniffed her hips and then slapped her flesh! Struggling to pull a condom from my wallet with one hand, I continued finger-fucking her with my other. Finally, I got it on, and pressed the head of my dick against that pouting little pussy. With one hand on my cock, the other grabbed the back of her neck. She looked over her shoulder at me. Her mouth gaping as I slowly pushed my erection past her labia and deeper. Her head rose back, and I yanked a fistful of her hair. With one harsh stab, I drove my dick all the way in! She gasped, and I pulled her back harder. But we held still. While I was deep inside, I leaned over her, grabbing her tits while we kissed. Kissing and gradually moving, slowly fucking each other. She soon pushed her ass back more vigorously, and I needed to get a better footing, as my pants were still about my knees. Standing up, I appreciated the view. Nothing quite like screwing a girl with just her ass sticking out from her dress. The collisions then got harder and faster. Pounding and grinding. She moaned and whimpered. Who would have known that she had such a foxy booty under all those clothes. But then again, who the fuck knew that she was a secret fucking agent from some forgotten Cold War conspiracy.

She sounded like she was cumming already, so I slowed and withdrew. Pulling her over, I sat on the sofa, forcing her on top. She kissed me as she guided my erection back into her smooth wetness. I reached up and pulled her dress down, revealing those perky tits that I had to get a fucking taste of. She rode me hard, clawing at my chest and digging her fingernails into my arms as she cried out. Driving her weight violently against my penetration, she was out of control. I had to cling to her hips and slow her down before she snapped my dick off.

She then flinched, sounding like she was weeping, and then lowered her head and started kissing me again. I continued the momentum. I wanted more. So, I pulled her dress up and totally off. Time to get naked. We got up and I

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laid her on top of a table. Licking my way down her tits to her belly button, I then went down to you know where. Her thighs clamped about my head, and it took all of my strength to pry her legs open so that I could continue. My hands moved inside her legs while I licked her precious clit and started fingering her with my thumb. My other hand reached up and I found that she was already squeezing her own nipples. Then she put both of her hands on my shaved skull, slowly scratching my scalp as she gasped in a frenzy – but then suddenly she shoved me away!

I grinned. Now that I had a taste, I was an addict. Pushing her thighs wide open, my palms pressed down, and fingers spread her apart as I placed my erection against her vulva. She was sweating. I loved watching her mouth. So, I got her to suck on my thumb as I carefully inserted my hard-on back into her pussy. She sucked hard, and I pushed deeper inside, pulling her hips close. Pumping her on the table top, my hands ran over her legs. Vases fell to the floor and shattered, but who gives a fuck? I do! Ha!

She sat, so I picked her up. I was still balls-deep inside of her as I walked us to the bed. Dumping her in the center of that king-size mattress, I rolled her onto her left side, her left leg straight, the right leg bent up, and I was on top and back into her. I could feel her cervix against the head of my dick, and she loved it. Clutching her right hip and thigh, I used the bounce from the bed to fuck her faster. Staring at that big tattoo on her back, I suddenly remembered sitting in a café when she had first shown me photos on her phone. I ran my palm over her tattooed skin just to remind myself that she was actually here. She then cried out and could hardly breathe as she climaxed again. Then she pushed me back. I slowed down. She tried to breathe.

“No more...,” she whispered.

But I was only just getting started. Yet she twisted around, climbed on top, before ripping the condom off! Well, okay. I watched that glistening rubber sail through the dimly lit hotel room in slow motion – until I felt my hard-on slip back into her mouth. Oh, sweet Jesus on a cross! That girl had some kind of biblical blowjob power, because she sucked and jerked me off until it was my turn to gasp for fucking air!

Then she crawled up and whispered seductively, “Do you want to cum in my ass?”

I almost came right then from hearing her say those fucking words. “Ah, yes!”

She smiled like that modest friend I had once known. Sitting back on top of me, she aimed my hard-on for the eye of the needle. She arched her back,

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and I held my fucking breath.

“Slowly,” she murmured.

I didn’t actually do anything, just laid there watching her exquisite expression as she pushed her ass down on my dick.

Oh... Fuck... Yeah...

Ride ‘em, cowgirl!

She pressed down further, and I grabbed her hips and fucked her slow. Sliding my erection from the head to the base, I paused. And then back out to the head. Paused. Then in. Paused. She leaned forward, kissing me tenderly, but then whispered, “Fuck me hard. Bruce, fuck me in the ass as hard as you can.”

Thank you, god! Finally, she said my name when I actually wanted to fucking hear it!

I told her to twist around, face away, and then sit back down but lean backward onto me. Lying there, I held her hips up in both of my hands as she spread her legs and I started fucking her faster. I fixated on her ass pounding against my pelvis. Her hair hung in my face and she moaned louder. Our bodies slapped together like clapping hands. Sweating like a motherfucker, I loved every fucking moment and inch of her.

Rolling her over, I got on my knees and pulled her up on all-fours. I forced her knees wider. Wider! Pushing her head down against the sheets, I then took her wrists and made her reach back and stretch her own ass cheeks open for my viewing pleasure. She did everything I asked, and I glared insatiably at her asshole as her fingers spread it open like a target. Her vulnerable stance was like a magnet drawing my hard-on directly into her anus. So tight. So fucking good!

“Cum!” Mara cried out. “Cum in my ass, Bruce! I want you to cum inside me! Cum for me, Bruce! Oh, god! I’m going to cum again!”

Clenching her hips in my hands, I scowled at the pillow that she buried her face into. I fucked her brutally! Pumping deeper and pounding faster! She screamed into the pillow as I sodomized her ass so fucking hard that my blood boiled! Stabbing her flesh! Punching myself all the way inside of her with every ounce of strength I had, and then I fucked her harder still! Over and over, deeper and deeper, again and again! And suddenly she lifted her head and cried out in pain – and then I came so fucking much that I couldn’t stop! Smashing my body against hers with my blood-shot eyes clamped shut as I stretched back in a spasm. My arms were contorted, while my hands slowly covered my eyes as I fought for a fucking breath.

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Kneeling behind Mara with my hard-on still inside her royal asshole, I had flashbacks of everything that we had gone through this morning.

Eventually looking down, I immediately wished that I had my camera on me. My mental-photography will have to suffice. ‘Click.’

Pushing Mara forward, I laid on her back. Grinding my erection deeper inside of her ass again, my eyes rolled to the back of my endorphin-sodden skull.

“I like touching you,” I whispered. “Especially on the inside.”

She laughed softly, before quietly stating, “You do understand that none of this happened.”

Slowly sitting back, I studied my fat cock in her tight ass. “Not even this right here?”

Mara smiled sadly and shook her head.

I withdrew my erection, dragging some residual cum across her thigh, but then I pushed straight back into her moist ass. “Wow. This feels pretty fucking real to me.”

“The people I work for will clean up everything that happened this morning,” she whispered. “And I’ll deny ever meeting you. You know that’s how this all works. You understand, right?”

“Yeah... Yeah, I understand,” I replied, yet I was only interested in watching my dick as I continued withdrawing and penetrating her rosy rectum. “So then, if there’s absolutely nothing I can do that will make any of this ‘real’, then it’s all just a memory. It’s only as real as I remember it. But right now... You’re mine... All mine.”

“And never again.”

“I can live with that, cutie pie,” I grinned, jumping off the bed. Snapping my fingers, I moon-walked into the bathroom, adding with a wink, “You’re a bit of a psycho, but your ass was fucking worth it!”

Mara went to the bathroom after me. When she returned to the suite, I was staring out the window as the sun came up over another meaningless Monday morning in Berlin. Stepping up behind, she put her arms around me and held on tight. It was like she was terrified of letting go.

“Was it really worth it?” she asked faintly. “Really?”

Turning around, I looked down at little Mara who giggle once she saw that I was wearing my scary-face mask again. Pulling myself free of her embrace, I answered her question with a callous, “No.”

“You can stay...,” she whispered, staring at the floor.

“Why?”

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She said nothing.

Slipping on my jacket on my way to the door, I glanced at Mara watching me from the middle of the bed. She sat with her knees up below her chin, and all of her flowing hair draped over both shoulders.

“If you need someone else to tell you what has value, then nothing has any relevance,” I said. “This was all pointless. But you... You were worth it... To me... But I have no idea what anything means to you.”

“Bruce...,” Mara spoke up.

I scowled back.

But she just stared at the floor.

“You look like you need a friend,” I said. “Why don’t you try being one.”

Pulling off my mask, I quietly shut the door behind me. While listening to Puscifer, *Horizons*, on my headphones, I bottled up my feelings like the weakness that they always were. What the fuck are people thinking when they seem to expect that I could comfort them in any way at all? I’m not a good person. I am just as immoral and abominable as all of you fucks! We all have our secrets, but once you tell me yours that doesn’t mean I have to fucking keep them!

So, I wrote all this shit down as soon as I got home this morning, while it’s still fresh in my mind and wet on my dick.

Bruce

The Small Hours



SHORT STORY 4
2013
LOCH-FUCKING-NESS

DISCLAIMER:

I wrote this while at Loch Ness, from 25th June - 2nd July 2013. It's written in the form of diary entries directly after the events took place.

"A man is not a man until he has accessed his raw, untamed energy and taken pleasure in his capacity to fight and defend himself. Only then can he transform his blind rage into the power to commit himself, to handle tensions and to make difficult decisions. A feeling of inner security also develops; it is based on his realization that, whatever happens to go wrong, he can get help from his inner resources, from the basic energy of his aggression." Guy Corneau.

ENTRY 1.

None of this was what I had planned. This was not how I had envisioned this vacation. But shit-fucking-happens. So, fuck it, this was how the game evolved, with me here, across those black waters from Boleskine House. Let's be honest however, I knew this was coming. It had been an upbeat couple of months with girls, girls, girls. But whenever I'm in a good mood for long enough, the pendulum swings back with a-fucking-vengeance! And from good times comes the birth of repulsion and sheer fucking hatred! It was unavoidable. This was just how the tide of emotions work. I have my ups, so in turn, I have my fucking downs, just like everyone. We are all fucking meat! Though, what had been planned was a road-trip through the Fatherland: from Edinburgh, up to the Highlands, and then down the west coast. I had even prepared a four-disk soundtrack of relevant music to accompany the drive. But what became of that road-trip? Female self-pity and her 'right to be jealous'. That's why I'm alone and sitting in the wood-scented lounge of an isolated hotel in the Highlands.

'She', an ex who'd come to the Fatherland once before, was going to do the driving. I've never gotten around to getting a license for myself. But due to her need for being the center of the fucking universe, she returned to Berlin after only two days away. Women, what absolute contradictions. She says one minute, "I want to know these things!" And then the next, "I don't

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want to see these things!” I’m damned if I do and I’m damned if I don’t. So, I laughed. But that only pissed benzine on the fire of narcissistic feminism. Fuck her! She can fuck off back to Berlin if she truly believes that I hate her entire fucking existence! Yet if I didn’t want to spend time with her, I wouldn’t have invited her on vacation

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I had awoken on Tuesday 25th June (the very morning that we left for this trip), and found a text message on my phone, *“I just want to let you know that I might not stay the whole time with you in Scotland. I will come with you today and stay at your aunt’s place, and then I will decide what’s next. Just to let you know.”* It was only the latest of many threats that she had made about canceling our road-trip. We soon met at the airport, though, we didn’t talk during the whole flight. Not a single word. Eventually, we eased up on the bus into the Edinburgh city, where we had our last dinner together on the Royal Mile. While in the middle of eating, she demanded that I apologize for bringing another girl to a friend’s place on Sunday. Apologize?! That wasn’t going to happen! I might have been jealous of her many toy-boys, but I never complained to her, because she wasn’t my fucking girlfriend anymore! Neither of us had the right to fucking demand anything from each other. This conversation was over!

Nothing like hissed spite into the face of a lover with vicious whispers. I would have yelled, but suddenly last Friday I lost my voice for no apparent reason. Had I caught something from screwing this new nineteen-year-old?

After dinner, I considered my options while she booked a flight back to Germany, so that she could go fuck some new pretty boy that she bragged about. She had a tendency to fall for male models with lame personalities, and then she’d say things like, “He’s so damned good looking, but so fucking boring.”

I however, had nothing left to say to her, and won’t until at least six months have passed under our burnt bridge. There’s plenty more fresh meat out there, and I don’t care if a girl’s boring or not, as long as she fucking swallows!

My hatred is just an equal opposition to how much I had once loved her.

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On Thursday 27th June, it was pouring with rain when I alone caught the train to Inverness. I found myself seated next to a New York mother of three. Talking openly about cultures, philosophy, relationships, art, and drugs, I eventually admitted how much I was looking forward to going somewhere where no one knew who I was. I wanted nothing more than anonymity

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without any association to my past or present reputation. Isolation from the preconceptions and expectations of others. But I quickly realized that that was an unobtainable idea, once she asked about my tattoos in contrast to the King James Bible on my lap.

Yesterday, when I bought the Bible at Waterstones on Princes Street, a voice came up from behind, saying, “The Holy Bible?”

I turned slowly, eyeballing some chick in black, as I replied in my hoarse voice, “You mean, holy shit.”

While leering at me like I was a whore on the curb, she smiled, adding ambiguously, “It’s never too late.”

We can never escape the prejudice of everyone else. It’s a human instinct to judge others upon first impressions. We all suffer from superficiality.

My first impression of the Highlands was of the strangeness of the mountains, I guess they were defined as ‘mountains’, though they were more like rolling-ranges with smooth curves that faded into low hanging clouds. The Scottish landscape, with its blankets of patchwork shrubs, was nothing like those picturesque Swiss Alps. Yet even at the end of June, spots of snow were still visible among the lonely gray mansions dotted about that immense emptiness of a bleak vista. Seriously, where were all the people? The countryside seemed utterly abandoned.

Three and a half hours later, the train arrived at Inverness. I was expecting a large city, but it was merely a township of pale rock-chiseled churches and moss-coated homes with soulless windows. The hills were deserted. The only thing I took notice of was the pretty Eastern European girl in the missing-persons poster on the walls of the train station. People disappear under suspicious circumstances whether civilization was there or not.

I couldn’t remember the last time I was in a bus driven by a suicidal lunatic. Once we were just out of Inverness, I realized how loosely the bus was traveling when we hurtled past a vast graveyard at the feet of some mountain of stone. Heading south, we shot by a blur of trees next to a meadow, before Loch Ness itself suddenly emerged through the forest. This flat mass of water appeared between a dark haze of rushing branches. At the velocity in which we were racing, I wondered if the driver was trying to make it into the Guinness Book Of Records for driving a bus faster than the speed of terror! Glaring at the loch, I soon noted that there could have been a Russian nuclear submarine in there, and no one would have ever known. The loch was fucking huge! You’d need a fleet of aircraft-carriers to do any kind of serious search for anything lurking in the depth. Again, I surveyed the

Loch-Fucking-Ness

desolate woodlands, and asked myself, where the fuck was everyone hiding?! There were almost no houses anywhere. It was a great land of nothing.

Evening was settling when the bus dropped me off at a three-way intersection. Turning on my heels, I found the bungalow-like hotel sitting quietly across the road, with only three other buildings nearby: a craft shop, a general store, and a public hall further down the road. And that was it. Remote to say the least.



After checking in, I decided to go for a stroll before dinner, and came across a waterfall beneath the woodland road. Heading right, into the forest, I climbed onto a broken-down stone bridge not far from the modern highway overpass. Studying the river, I was curious as to why the water looked like

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crude oil as it slipped down the valley and around the steep cliffs before it inevitably poured into the Loch. A fish then leaped up stream, only to be washed back down the rocks. It was cold looking shit. Not the sort of spot that welcomed idiot skinny dippers, yet this gorge seemed hungry for the dumped bodies of dismembered runaways. The place was fucking decrepit – just like me!



So, I have four nights alone at Loch Ness, with nothing but the Bible and my own spiteful devices for entertainment. Fuck peace of mind and fuck this tranquility!

ENTRY 2.

Loch-Fucking-Ness

After a late dinner, on my first night at the loch, I went for another walk. It was 10pm and still light. Not chilly but cool. I only came here in my dress shoes and wasn't prepared for hiking. The crossroads led in three directions. The road that my bus had taken came inland from the loch for about a kilometer to the hotel, then it turned left and followed the river back to the water and further south. The third road headed west with the river. I decided to go back



the way the bus had come. Back toward the loch. There was no footpath, so I crept along the side of the road. Though, if I had thought that there was very little traffic earlier, the place was beyond dead now. A field lay to my right, leading to a cluster of large trees on a tiny hill. I kept aimlessly drifting along with the faint breeze, until I came across a gateway above a modest

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cemetery. The arching trees looked inviting, so I stumbled on down the path. Old gravestones looked forgotten by the world of man. It was a damp and secluded place. There I stood, scowling up at the looming mountain on the south-side of the river. The woods seemed much denser than they had first appeared from the edge of the road. Still, I felt nothing.

Moving back to the road, I continued toward the loch. Usually, I'd be



walking while listening to my MP3 player, but the only thing I wanted to hear was the steady sound of my shoes on the asphalt. Slow and careless. I didn't know if there was anything ahead, or if the road just ran north through the woods for the next thirteen kilometers, back to the next town. But then I came around a slight bend and found a driveway heading askew from the

Loch-Fucking-Ness

main road. I couldn't tell if it was a private or public road as I stared at those two stone pillars either side of the entrance. It appeared as though it led to the loch, so down I went.

Soon, I came across open fields to my right, and a distant, bright white, manor house shrouded by all that gloom. Ignoring the building, I finally saw the water's edge further down. I ducked under the warning sign on a closed gate and followed a trickling creek on my left. And there I was, standing on the shores of Loch Ness, the mouth of the river directly on my right. Mist clung to the summits of the ridge on the east-side of the loch, and not a single sign of another human's presence was anywhere to be seen. There was just me and those fucking insects.



The water was wide and still. Gently lapping ripples stretched away from my fingers as I crouched down and touched that brownish surface. Funny how we humans always have to touch something just to know that it's really there. Got to have that tangible experience accompanying the visual input. Right then, as I stood up, I heard a SPLASH! I fucking saw something, a splash of water way out there where the river spilled into the loch. I paused.

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Of course, I didn't believe that some fresh water dinosaur might suddenly raise its ugly head and give a cheesy wink while I fumbled for my camera. No, but I absolutely saw a splash in the middle of those otherwise dead calm waters. So, I stood still. Watching. I then had a vision of a killer-whale leaping onto the muddy shore for a giant mouthful of my ass. So, I gently took a step back. And then logic came to mind, and I recalled the salmon that I'd seen leaping up the waterfall back by the hotel. A salmon. There you go. Thank you, rational brain. However, I had always heard that the waters of Loch Ness were dark, but honestly, they were fucking tar, smothering my senses with unease.

Suddenly I was attacked by a swarm of angry fucking mosquitoes! Turning, I walked the fuck away. Heading up the thin driveway, I noticed how much darker everything had become – just like my mood. From bitter to worse, I was alone! This wasn't how I fucking wanted this vacation to go! I hate this fucking place! I absolutely fucking hate it! I hate her! But I had wanted her to be here with me! I didn't want her to simply abandon me here! But perhaps she was right. I fucked it all up. I did this. It was my fault. I soon became acutely aware that I wasn't even thinking about her – it was all about me! Looking around the forest, I sneered with growing anger at the blackened shadows of the trees. And I remembered fear. Remembered it, but I couldn't feel it. I remembered being a child and having a fear of places like this. In fact, this whole situation would have driven me to tears as a sniveling insecure brat. But now, I stood on a road in an echoing silence. I was utterly alone. And I felt only anger! No fear, no intimidation, no fucking importance! They say 'anger' and 'sadness' are different forms of the same energy. But it was all so fucking meaningless! Everything was empty! "So, this is Scotland!" I hissed through my mangled vocal-cords, scanning that all-encompassing forest of vacant worthlessness. This was the essence of disappointment. No girl! No road-trip! No monster! No fear of any-fucking-thing at all! Yet all my disappointment only pissed me off even more, as I marched up the center of the road. Fuming with intolerance and self-hatred, it occurred to me, I was about to start going through withdrawals. Been here before. I was in resistance. Dwelling on my own misfortune. But I've always known that I've always been alone. Remember who the fuck you are! Let go of these fucking delusions of female pretension, and appreciate that I have always kept the myself company! Let it go! Yet I still took it all so fucking personally! This was the constant conflict between the emotional and rational processes. Why did it bother me so? Because there's a weakness about myself

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that has been exposed. The ego was insulted, therefore it demanded defense! However, wherever you find yourself most uncomfortable, there's room for growth.

Strolling up to the hotel, I sat on the porch, lingering on how fear used to haunt me when I was a fucking child. And just as I no longer had nightmares, I no longer cared for the approval of even my lovers. Like all females, they're the only ones who have ever truly disappointed me. I myself however, have never let me down! Women, I could tell you a thing or fucking two about fucking women and their back-stabbing, whining little fucking ways. How does that Tom Waits song go, *"There are a few things I never could believe. A woman when she weeps. A merchant when he swears. A thief who says he'll pay. A lawyer when he cares. A snake when he is sleeping. A drunkard when he prays. I don't believe you go to heaven when you're good. Everything goes to hell, anyway."* If there's one absolute rule you can always stand by: a crying female is a lying female! Whenever a girl starts to tear-up, I smile. Partly because I enjoy watching anyone in misery, but mostly because I know they're faking it! I absolutely believe that no female human being has ever cried for any reason other than to manipulate another person. People rant about how females are the empathetic-gender, and that males are merely tools. Wrong! Females are conniving, unscrupulous traitors! While males are overly gullible and easily enslaved! I say, fuck this unquestionable worship of the unjustified yet self-appointed 'goddess'! I say, see these fucking whores for what they fucking are: devious, attention-seeking fucking parasites! Females will betray you the very fucking instant a better fucking deal comes along! Do you see what I'm fucking saying here? Do you understand? I say, if you study women closely, you'll learn how to think like the devil! And then beat these cunts at their own fucking game! Show them no fucking quarter!

Always remember: a crying female is a lying female!

Women = meat.

ENTRY 3.

I woke up late on Friday morning, after plenty of those usual dreams of people trying to kill me. As I was lying in my antique hotel room, I considered my troubled thoughts from last night. About who was at fault. Ultimately, I'm to blame. No one could make me feel anything, only I could. It was me who allowed myself to become disappointed. Therefore, my ex has no effect on me. No one else has any power over me. One person alone is responsible for

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my actions, emotions, and state of mind, and that motherfucker is me!

Lying in bed with my hands behind my head, I thought of other girls back in Germany. There was always more meat in the market. No one was special. None of them. They were all just fleeting images over my retina, and temporary sensations upon my flesh. Yet how I loved the skin on skin. The danger however, was in letting the stimulation form delusions of my own external importance. For as you are for me, I am for you: u-n-i-m-p-o-r-t-a-n-t! We are all alone. No one sees anything from anyone else's point of view. You can't see these trees outside my window right now, and you'll never understand exactly how the leaves are falling in the breeze. These words are like everything I've ever said, here to be misconstrued and reinterpreted by whoever the fuck reads this and applies their own agenda to, unconsciously or otherwise. Do you see what I'm saying? No, of course not. I could never articulate the complete intricacy of any visceral situation or abstract thought through the mere communication of words. Some shit just needs to be dealt with first-hand.

ENTRY 4.



Loch-Fucking-Ness

It's evening now. Spent the day performing blasphemy and self-indulgences. I started with a walk down the south-side of the river and ended up on the edge of the loch directly across the mouth of the river from where I was standing last night.

It had been a warm morning, until I stepped onto the rugged shoreline where the wind hit hard. I buttoned up my jacket and took a seat on a large rock where I watched the waves come quivering in. The gusts were frosty, and the sky was overcast – except for a perpetual hole in the clouds where the sun beamed straight down on me as I tried to relax. I was becoming Bark again. My frame of mind wasn't exactly pleasant. I had hoped that once I left the water's edge, I might witness a collision between a truck and a school bus, so that I could stand back and watch all those screaming little fucks burn alive! But no such sight presented its awesome glory. I hate this fucking place.

I had a pot of Earl Grey on the porch of the hotel and sat glaring bitterly at the random meat that happened to drive on by. Looking up at that mountain facing the hotel, I recalled the tourist guide stating that it was called: Sron Na Muic ('Nose Of The Pig' in Gaelic). With a brilliant name like that, I would

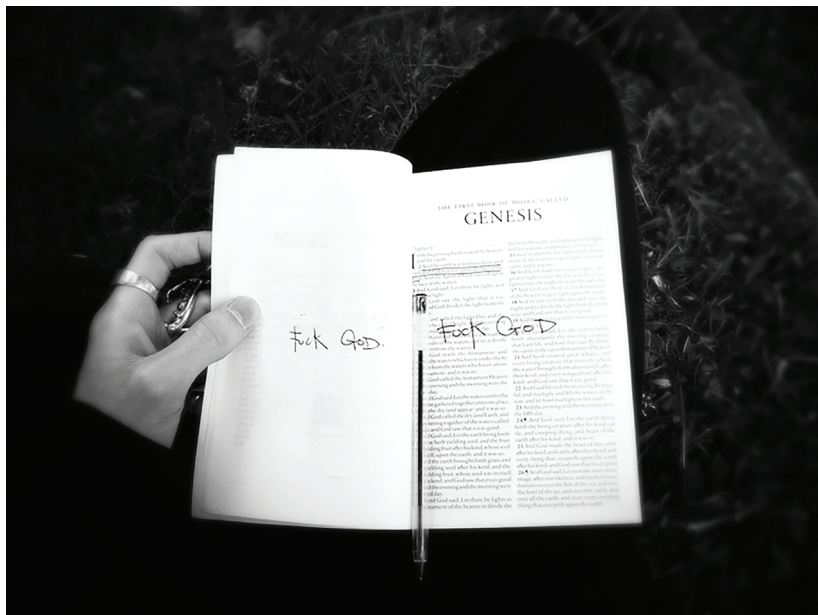


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have to climb it and pay homage to the pig in all of us.

But first things first. I collected my Holy Bible, along with a few ballpoint pens, and quietly made my way over to that local graveyard. Jumping a moss-laden stone wall, I tread over the churned-up dirt of a large paddock, while the highland cattle shuffled about at the far end. Then I scaled that steep mound of a hill crowned with a cluster of tall trees. My instincts had been correct, this was the perfect spot to begin my desecration.

Sitting on the grass with the wind at my back, I opened the first page of the Bible and wrote my full name. As I read on, I began underlining violent passages, while I proceeded to scrawl 'FUCK GOD' upon each and every page! I am Bruce Stirling John Knox!



As I sat in the shade of the trees, violating sacred scripture, the sun came out again, and all seemed right with this degenerate fucking world. But beauty was only perfect when it was forced to suffer something truly fucking awful. Yet did the clouds part and the angels come down to confront my cursing of Moses? No! No one fucking cared. Because no one fucking knew exactly what I was doing out there. All those happy fucking families down in the parking lot licking their fattening fucking ice cream in the sunshine

Loch-Fucking-Ness

had no clue as to what that guy on the hilltop was really up to. Give me what you hold dear, and I will contaminate your daughters. Trust me. I'm fucking charming. And they're all whores anyway!

By the time I reached Leviticus, those creeping winds had chilled me through to my bones, so I walked away Scot-free, as if I had just murdered a sleeping infant in some third-world slum where law and order was a myth afforded by none. I knew that I had more exploring to do. The ridge behind the hotel was calling me. I could smell sacrilege burning in my veins. God's hatred for mankind lives through me! There is nothing precious! I shit on your fear of god!

However, when I got back to my room, I was shivering. Not from the cold but from withdrawal. Not psychological withdrawal from my ex abandoning me, no. Withdrawal from sex. It was Friday and I hadn't fornicated since Sunday. I was getting the shakes! Finding some photos on my laptop of the nineteen-year-old from Hamburg, I masturbated while staring hard into her adoring eyes. She wanted it. They all did. They couldn't help it. Just like I couldn't. And I smiled. Sadistically. Thinking of her. How we fucked. I already called her 'mine'. Yet she was just like every other lover, not mine and never was! Value was merely whatever I fucking made it. You're mine only if I want you. But that didn't mean she would ever submit fully. Even though she already had. I love fresh meat.

At dinner, I discovered that the building had come to life. It was a safe bet that the hotel's tavern was the only venue for miles that any old prick could get a hot meal and something cold to drink. One of the Eastern European waitresses took me to the last available table, where I noticed a new girl behind the bar. She was petite, shy-looking, with her mousy-brown hair in a ponytail.

After dinner I ordered another pot of Earl Grey, and the new girl brought it into the lounge for me. She placed the pot on the coffee table with a mischievous smirk as she looked me straight in the eye. I guess I wasn't like the usual type of patron that they had around these parts. Yet, glancing at all the antlers mounted on the walls, I knew, without a doubt, that I wasn't so different from the locals. Trophies are trophies.

ENTRY 5.

I just got back to the hotel. It's after midnight. And pissing with rain. I think I'm beginning to like it here.

Bruce Stirling John Knox

After my pot of tea, I grabbed my Bible, and hiked up a steep, zig-zagging trail behind the hotel. Following the path that led upward in a north-eastern direction, I left the beaten track and ignored the warning signs.



The woodland got fucking intense. Some of the places between the trunks were blacker than pitch. So, I stared into every abyss with welcoming fucking eyes. It was the fallen trees with their up-torn roots that seems to harbor the darkest nooks. Dead trees had disgraced tendrils hanging over ugly orifices in that moss-saturated earth. Moss was common place, for this land was too inhospitable for any grass to grow.

After a decent trek, I found myself upon the exposed peck of the ridge. It had casually taken an hour to reach that summit, but the view over the loch

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was worth the climb. Up there, I watched the setting sun at 10pm. Not another human being was anywhere to hear a scapegoat scream. I hadn't been this isolated since I got lost in the forest north of Berlin, eight years ago. Maybe I've never been this alone. The wind was cool on my face, and I wanted nothing more than to stay right where I was.



But like they say, what goes up, must get his fucking ass back down the mountain before it gets so dark that he gets lost, and then stumbles off a fucking cliff, never to be seen again. On my way down that overgrown trail, I was annoyed that there were no public benches anywhere that I might sit upon and continue my violation of the Holy Bible. But soon I discovered how dark those shaded stretches of the woods could become at this time of night. Black and foreboding as fuck! I walked on with a psychotic grin across my manic teeth. How at home in that emptiness I found myself. Alive with spite, I tempted fate while I spat in the face of devils lurking in the unseen absence of illumination. Yet I could see them all! They were part of me! I was surrounded by myself and my own imprisoning hostility. I fucking hated them all for not ripping my head off my fucking shoulders! Then I

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suddenly saw something! Something further down that twisted path. A weird shape. An erect form. What the fuck was it? I continued moving closer. Then I recognized that I was confronting little more than a woodland deer. The creature darted backward a few yards at the sight of a man's off-colored teeth. Was this the worst that the forest could conjure up? Then that little thing shot up the hillside and was instantly lost among insidious shadows that enshrouded everything around me.

I'd been listening to my headphones playing Tool the whole way up the ridge, and just as the song *Opiate* came on, I felt the first droplets of rain upon my head. I had been growing my hair for last two weeks, and now it was soft on my palm as I ran my hand over my scalp and down my face – when a figure appeared on the path. It was the bar-girl from the hotel. Sweet fucking temptation had once again come to lead me astray. We walked up to each other, meeting at a narrow path that headed away to my left, toward the loch.

“You lost?” she asked, with that sexy fucking Scottish accent.

“Do I look it?”

“You're the tea-drinker. Everyone's wondering why you haven't touched the single malt yet.”

“Everyone?”

“The girls were talking about you in the kitchen before I left this evening. I like your tattoos.” She paused, taking half a step to her side, “Oh. I see. You're a man of god. Since when did priests not drink? Oh, gosh! I'm sorry father. I didn't mean nothing by it.”

I guess being dressed all in black and holding a Bible really did make me seem somewhat type-cast.

“You better watch your step, father. Once it starts to rain this track can be the death of you.”

“Please... Don't call me that.”

And then, just like that, the rain came.

I hunched and began walking off without another word from my raspy throat.

“Wait, father!” The girl glanced at the Bible in my tattooed hand. She hesitated for another moment, and then smiled warmly (did I mention her teeth had braces). “Come on. Come with me. I'm staying nearby. It's safer than risking getting washed away.”

She hurried down the private footpath to my left, as the rain hammered through the canopy of pines and whatever the fuck those enormous trees were.

Loch-Fucking-Ness

“It’s set in for the night!” she called back. “Come on, father! Quickly!”

The last lines of *Opiate* echoed through my thoughts, as I tucked my headphones into my jacket pocket: “*My god’s will becomes me. When he speaks, he speaks through me. He has needs, like I do. We both want to rape you.*”

So, the little waitress led me around the hillside, while I focused on her tight ass in black jeans. My loathing toward women was only matched by my attraction. And then I looked up as a pale monolith appeared through those prison-bars of dead trees. Putting it simply, there was a castle on the side of that steep valley. Well, no, it wasn’t exactly a castle, but a three-story mansion fashioned with towers, spires, and battlements. There were grand bay-windows topped with countless chimneys upon a macabre roof. The place looked like it had been abandoned for at least a hundred years. Vines choked the entire backside of the house as if they were slowly pulling the very building into the guts of hill. A sharp granite cliff dropped off from the edge of a narrow front garden, displaying a splendid view over the glen and the loch. Even though I had been higher on the summit, it wasn’t until here that I really appreciated how far up I had traveled. That sheer drop made me stay to the backside of the leaf-clogged gravel path, but I nearly tripped over a strewn statue of some defaced Greek beauty. The little waitress laughed at me and skipped up the stone steps to the front balcony and entrance. The key she used looked like a small medieval weapon, yet the solid oak door swung open like it weighed nothing. Before I stepped inside, I noticed that above the doorway was a speckled slab of rock with the statement, The Old Grahams. Huh, and I thought of what my aunt had told me about my grandmother’s side of the family.

“Father?”

Ignoring the little waitress, I turned slowly, glaring down at the loch. Huge clouds were drowning the mountains with misty curtains of rain sweeping over the land in slow motion. Ah, this was the Scotland that I had anticipated: dismal!

“Father?”

“My name... Is Bruce,” I sneered, yet found that the girl had vanished somewhere within that gloomy interior. Only her jacket lay dumped in the middle of the wooden floor. I remained on the doorstep, watching as the little waitress returned with a lit candle. Candles? For fuck’s sake! She moved to a corner in that large open space and fiddled with a fuse box on the wall, and then, let there be light! We had electricity again. Thank fuck! Stepping inside,

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I shut the front door, when I was suddenly struck by how much I was going to miss my ex in these next six months. The duration I'd have to wait for any feelings of attachment to suffocate and die. Just like leaving mice in an airtight jar, all you have to do is neglect them. It's worked with all my other girls. And in six months from now, she will mean little more than holes that I used to fuck. "So, what's your name, kid?" I asked, wiping the rain from my face, but again that little waitress had disappeared. I stood still, examining the reddish color of the floor's woodwork. It was a dirty honey texture. The wallpaper was black-green with gold details. Black and white etchings and photographs hung among old rifles and animal-head trophies. Nice place.

"Would you like a tea?"

"Sure," I slyly replied, turning left where I saw the girl sticking her head around a doorway. Stepping closer, I stared right back into her pretty eyes – until she glanced at my Bible again, and then she ducked behind the wall. Fucking kids.

The next room was like the entrance and had a two-levels-high ceiling. There was a library at the far end and a grand piano next to several leather sofas, so naturally I sat at the piano. Lush scarlet drapes were tidied back yet still obscured half the view of the loch. I placed my Bible face-down on the lid of the piano, as cups clattered from another corridor. Scanning the dusty furniture, I eventually gazed at the batteries of rain clawing at the tall windows.

Shortly, the little waitress and I sat at the piano sipping on piping hot black tea – without any milk or fucking sugar! I hid my frustration well. Her name was Rachel. Twenty-two. From somewhere I can't remember and didn't care to. She was baby-sitting this house during her holidays, while she also worked at the hotel, and wrote a paper for her studies on the relocation of wind-farms in Great Britain. Maybe it was her braces, but she looked half her age in the dimly lit library. A leopard skin covered a portion of the piano where thick gold-framed photos of hunters with dead animals made me ask more about the building. She didn't have much to say: an historical house kept in some Trust. I soon spotted a row of scars on Rachel's left forearm. She was another troubled female who had slashed herself up in her teens. If only I had a dollar for every girl I've met with this exact same story.

"What happened to your voice, father?" she asked. "Too much yelling at the congregation?"

I looked away as if she had just slapped me across the face. Staring at a dead grandfather clock, I wondered how long its pendulum could swing

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before it needed winding. There's no such thing as perpetual motion. Everything decays.

"You're not like ministers I've met before," Rachel pushed. "Maybe they do things differently in Berlin. You like it there? Got a large folk under your wing?"

"Kid, no one ever listens."

"Just like you don't answer direct questions."

Rolling my jaw, I lifted the lid of the piano. I can't play, but I still softly pressed the odd random key, listening to the timid tone purr within that empty space around us. Notes that faded into the echoes of the rain.

"So? Have you had a crisis of faith?"

Even though I was facing the piano, I could feel her eyes stroking my right ear. "No, not at all. The polar opposite in fact."

"Ah, so you're refreshing your convictions." She leaned her elbow upon the edge of the black wood, resting her head while she watched me. Glancing at her, I listened as she continued talking, "What's it like? Being you? I mean, with your take on how the world works, despite most everyone having modern technology and information, with science free for all to see. How do you maintain your belief system at all?"

"How old is the human species?" I interjected.

"A few million years, at a guess."

"Why don't you know exactly? The information is out there. Why don't you know exactly and in detail everything already discovered and perfectly measured?!" I demanded, when I heard a creaking noise coming from another doorway.

"You admit taking advantage of people's ignorance?"

"We're all being played by someone." I glared at the door as the creaking became louder. "It's all a fucking game."

"That's a funny attitude for a holy man."

"When the fuck did I ever say that I was holy?"

"Ah, see. You are having a crisis of faith. Don't you think you're good enough?"

"You're confusing me with my ex."

"Ex? Ex-girlfriend?" Rachel slowly sat back. "So, you're allowed to... You know..."

"Be a sodomite?"

"Well, you know what they say about priests," she smirked, but then put one hand on my shoulder and the other over her mouth in embarrassment, "Oh,

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I'm so sorry. Really, that's incredibly inappropriate of me. I do apologize."

Leaning in close, I looked her in the eyes and slowly said, "I... Forgive... You..." And I think I genuinely grinned for the first time since I had been on this fuck-up of a vacation.

"You're not what I was expecting," she whispered, pulling her hair out of the ponytail. That distant groaning noise then turned into rattling, and Rachel finally noticed my distraction. "Don't worry about that, it's nothing. Literally, it's nothing. I couldn't find where it's coming from when I first arrived. Just ignore it."

I'd rather ignore her wet clothes as I focused back on her glistening collar bones. Her throat was slender and milky. I could see it split open to her spine, like a bleeding vagina, gushing all over my fingers.

"I'm going to take a shower," she announced, standing up as she pulled her shirt out of her jeans. I glared at her exposed belly right in front of me as she unbuttoned her shirt while still eye-fucking my silence.

"Don't forget to wash out your filthy mouth," I hissed. "And behind your ears."

She smiled, then didn't as she came ever so slightly closer, arching over me. I could smell her skin, her perfume, and her breath. Then she spun and strut away. I didn't blink once as I watched her go.

I sat for a long time staring at the rain on the windows. There was nothing else worth doing.

Until that creaking noise came back again. It was drawn out and gradual but fucking persistent. I rose to my feet and went straight toward the sound, heading into a thin dark corridor. Around a bend. Up a few steps. Another corner or three. And suddenly I had lost all orientation. There were doors everywhere, so I grabbed at one. Locked. The next. Locked. All of them were locked. Then that noise again. Fuck it. I kept going. Turning a corner, I came to a large staircase bathed in impenetrable shadows. Wait a second, that noise wasn't getting any louder, it was a constant crackle at a maintained proximity. I studied the stairs with their intricate woodwork, when the noise slipped away. Above the staircase there was a large rosary window on the next landing, rimmed with creepers. The wind was battering this backside of house even louder as the trees scratched at the walls. Surveying the area, I took another passageway. Things were either pitch black, or barely silhouettes against dull shades of ebony. But onward I went. Slowly finding myself in utter darkness. My hands reached cautiously forward. Calm and curious. Then a wall. No, a door. Found a handle. It wasn't locked, but it was jammed. Putting my

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shoulder into it, I incrementally shoved that cunt open – and I stepped back into the main entrance of the house. Glancing about bitterly, I wondered how I had ended up on the opposite side of the building from where I had begun.

A scream!

Turning my head to the right, I scowled up the main staircase. I could hear Rachel calling out, saying something muffled. Up I went, but I ran for no one. On the first-floor landing, I saw light from a doorway down a corridor. There, steam came spilling out. I tapped on the dark wood of the door. “You okay in there?”

Another shriek, followed by, “Oh, Christ! You scared the shit out of me!” Rachel yanked open the bathroom door, while holding a massive white towel over her breasts. I looked her up and down as I leaned against the door frame, admiring her still wet thighs and hips. Then she smiled, “The hot water died on me, that’s all. Gave me a terrific fright.”

She turned her back on me and started drying her hair. For the love of fuck, she stood butt naked, and I took a good long fucking look.

“Here, hold this.” I heard her say, but I was already walking back toward the main staircase. Something then caught my eye. Something that moved. There was another door party ajar. Staring at it, I approached, though, heard nothing. Yeah, it was just my fucking imagination. So, I went to the library, collected my Bible, and was about to leave, right when Rachel came down the stairs in a long gray pullover and nothing else. “Don’t you want another cup of tea?”

I had the front door in my grasp but paused. There was something desperate in her voice.

“It’s not safe out there,” she insisted. “Please, stay the night.”

“Thanks for the tea. You have a good night now.” And I walked out.

This is the first time I have ever gone on vacation with an umbrella, yet the only time that I really needed the fucking thing, and it’s not with me! Cunt! I had one final moment of hesitation as the cold rain sunk into my scarf, and I pictured images of what Rachel’s warm body would look like pressed hard against a bed as I fucked her flat – but then something was in my way! I squinted through the dark rain and stopped where I was. It was a big black highland cattle. It looked like a great bull with its wide horns hunched low as it slowly exhaled through the cold downpour. I have no idea what it was doing up there, but what the fuck do I know, these cattle are probably let loose to roam wherever the fuck they like on the mountains. And it stood right in the middle of the footpath glaring at me. I grinned, and held my

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hands out wide, welcoming it. I've always wanted to go head to head with a fucking bull. Hopefully it might drive one of its massive horns right through my fucking rib-cage and pin me to a fucking tree. However, all it did was snort, before moving on up into the woods. Fucking chickenshit!

Eventually, I made it back to the hotel in one piece. But who would have thought that it was harder coming down a mountain than going up.

Thinking of Rachel and our serendipitous encounter, I needed to remind myself of why I had left her there alone. Because it was pure luck that our paths had crossed! Nothing special! Without meaning nor relevance. We just happened to meet. A random coincidence. And she just wanted to fuck. I was human-filler to her. If I had been in a better mood, I'd have seen nothing wrong with a spot of spontaneous fornication. But she simply fueled my fucking antipathy for human emptiness. We are nothing but meat! The only question however, was how much longer could I tolerate the taste of their skin before I had to eat them alive?

ENTRY 6.



Loch-Fucking-Ness

Saturday has been the coldest day so far. Had a pot of Earl Grey for breakfast. Rachel had served me with a smile as if nothing had happened last night. But then again, nothing had happened.

I then went for a walk past the graveyard, toward the shores of the loch. This time I headed down a different path to the left, into the grounds of a private property where I found a farm house. So, I turned right and went down the hillside, making my way through the trees to the loch.

Moving past a couple of ponds of murky water, I came to a tiny fishing cabin on the water's edge. I was pleased to find a table made from a large slab of stone right next to the shore where a healthy-looking rowboat was chained up and bobbing in a small stone marina.

Taking a seat, I continued my desecration of the Bible.



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The wind blew straight off the loch and soon brought in light showers. Yet I persisted with my work. What more could I fucking ask for on my vacation, but the cold wet indifference of the fucking universe. I was like a pig in shit.

Later, I walked further along the side of the loch, heading north. I wasn't going to stroll all the way to the next township in the weak rain, but I kept going for a lack of anything better to do with my fucking time. There was an open area of sloped grass, like a slender field with the woods on both sides and the highway up to my left. The stretch of grass led slowly into welcoming pines. Soon I found that the way had become an overgrown dirt road, that then turned into a muddy foot path, and eventually I was without a guide at all as I walked straight into the unadulterated wilderness. Again, I considered that if I simply laid down and died, would anyone even find my corpse this decade. No one knew exactly where I was. Another stupid fucking tourist gets lost and is presumed eaten by the monster. What a shame. Crowd weeps. Boo-fucking-hoo.

I got back to the hotel about 4pm. Had a pot of tea and was sitting in the lounge when a van of guys pulled into the front parking lot. Then I saw Rachel leaving. Her shift must have been over. One of the young guys grabbed Rachel by the shoulders and they both laughed about something. When he stepped inside, I heard him call back to her, "Yeah, cold hands but I got a warm heart."

This kind of approval-seeking bullshit always makes the bile burn at the back of my throat. I sipped on my tea and stared out the window as Rachel turned, glancing straight back at me. Her hair wasn't brown, it was actually slightly red. She's a fucking ginger! Soulless whore of Satan! She then hurried up to the outside of the window and said to me, "Come over later. I'll get milk and sugar for your tea this time."

I smiled without emotion and nodded reluctantly.

Sitting on the floor of my room, I continued ritualistically defacing the Holy Bible. One page at a time. Quote after quote. Violent slaughter after immoral justification. God is only as great as he is abominable!

Later, I went down by the river. Standing in the woods, I questioned the meaninglessness of dying alone in the wild. Yet people die every day in the city with just as much disregard. Death goes unnoticed until the stink seeps through the walls. Alone in the country or alone surrounded by millions, it makes no difference. When the end comes, it's all about how you fucking perceive it. But fuck this death-obsession! I came here of my own choice, therefore I'm still alive! However, what the fuck have I learned from this

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retreat? That I need to focus! Become the worst I can truly fucking be!

After dinner, I did some reading, and then continued committing sacrilege in the peace and quiet of my room. It's all starting to look much better.

I took a moment to write this, and then I'll put on my jacket and head up the north ridge to The Old Grahams place – so that I can finally find out what Rachel's tongue tastes like.

ENTRY 7.

There were more low hanging clouds about the glen this evening, and the further up the ridge I went, the lower the clouds came down to greet me. Why hadn't I brought my fucking umbrella this time?! Though, soon I made my way down that shaded path splitting off from the main trail before any rain came. The moment I glimpsed that giant house through the windy pines, I stopped. And turned. That black bull was standing behind me and growling. I didn't think bulls could sound like that. But I gave it the middle finger and spat in its general fucking direction. "Come on then, try something you fucking piece of shit!" But it didn't. So, I walked on, wondering where the fuck the bull had come from so quickly?

As I rapped my knuckles against that formidable front door, the deluge burst forth from those howling gales. Punching at the door until lights come on, I impatiently held my breath as the bolt was drawn back.

"Oh, you poor thing. Come in, come in, father," Rachel exclaimed, tugging at my arm. "Would you like a towel?"

We moved to the library, where Rachel had a desk set up with her laptop and a lamp. She grabbed a tartan blanket that was hanging over her armchair as we sat on a sofa near the windows.

"You always carry your Bible wherever you go?"

"It's a great way to pick up chicks in the woods."

Rachel faked her shock. "You're very forward, aren't you?"

"Is that a question?"

"I don't know. I've never... Not with a priest."

"That makes one of us."

She looked even more horrified. "You mean you were..."

"Hasn't everyone?"

"Well, I don't have a penis."

"That makes two of us."

This time she smiled. "You're fucking with me, aren't you."

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“Not yet.”

She pathetically shoved me in the chest, whispering, “Maybe I should call you daddy instead of father.”

I burst out laughing at that one. “If you get me an Earl Grey with milk and four sugars, you can call me Uncle Fingers for all I care.”

In the kitchen, I watched the rain pound the overgrown windows panes. The kettle had just boiled when I glanced at Rachel. She stood with her back to me, staring into a blackened corridor. Casually stepping up beside her, I tilted my head toward that absolute darkness. There was nothing there. Fuck this. I stepped into the corridor – Rachel immediately grabbed my wrist. Looking me in the eyes, she smiled nervously at my aggravation.

“Water’s ready!” She dropped my wrist, laughing faintly. “Cup of tea?”

Back in the library, Rachel and I chatted about places far from here, and subjects that were more entertaining than intelligent. It got on for 11pm when I suggested that I leave before it got too dark again.

“No. Stay. There are plenty of beds.”

“All depends on if I get the best one.”

“Which one’s that?”

“The one you’re in.”

She didn’t look impressed.

“The power of Christ compels me,” I added, and we both laughed anxiously at the lameness of my comment. “Yeah, I should go.”

“No! Really, I want you – to stay,” she insisted, and then suddenly straddled me! Before I knew it, she had her tongue down my throat. Well, okay then. One thing led to another, and the next thing I knew, I was fucking her against those big windows. She stood, legs wide, her elbows and face pressed to the glass as I pounded her from behind. Nice view, if you know what I mean. And she was a screamer. It was a good thing that no one else was in the house, or anywhere on the hillside for that matter. So, scream, bitch, scream! Louder! Harder! Longer! Fucking scream!

I came while yanking back on her ponytail and saw something that I couldn’t honestly be sure of. Something outside the window. My first impression said that it was a person, but then logic argued that it was merely the wind in the trees. It was just a distortion of my post-sex, blurred vision. Whatever it had been, it had my attention despite the naked ass of that little waitress right in my hands. Though, not for long, as after I took the condom off, Rachel dropped to her knees and sucked my dick clean like a trained professional. With her braces reflecting the golden lamp light, I couldn’t help

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enjoying that view of perverted innocence. Tick that fantasy off my list of shit to do before I die.

In an upstairs bathroom, while Rachel was showering, I took her eyeliner and looked in the mirror. There I proceeded to draw on my forehead, the Egyptian hieroglyphs for The King Of The North And The South. As above so below. I am the imbalance pendulum.

When Rachel stepped out of the shower, she must have seen the big black pentagram tattooed across my back for the first time as she froze dead still. “What kind of priest are you?”

“The unholy kind.”

“You... You make no sense whatsoever.”

“You’re not the first, and you won’t be the last, to say so.”

“Father, you definitely weren’t a virgin the way you fucked me. Ouch.”

“Tell it to a priest or someone who gives a damn,” I hissed with a grin. Turning away from the mirror, I reached out and took Rachel’s hand, ignoring her confusion at the symbols on my forehead.

Back in Rachel’s small and depressing bedroom, I laid her on the bed, spread her legs wide open, and then used the eyeliner pencil to draw a large sun-disk around her vagina with the wings of a vulture stretching all the way down the inside of both of her thighs. I used up the whole pencil filling in the details and black snakes, and then I took her red lipstick and painted her entire genitalia within the sun-disk. Here was the one true god worth worshipping. Worship and violate. You cannot have one without the other. The divine contradiction. To hate what you want! What the fuck is wrong with me? I then fucked her again. Paying penance to the holiest of holes. For I am the serpent just as she is the vulture. The red and white crowns worn as one upon the head of the son of Osiris. But I am Bruce Stirling John Knox, so I fucked that pretty little waitress in her asshole just to deny the importance of her cunt! Coat me in your shit and let me smell the fucking waste of your rotten insides!

Rachel passed out almost immediately after I was done with her tight rectum. I however, wasn’t tired in the slightest. So, I let her lie, and headed back downstairs, with make-up smeared all over my sweaty flesh. Returning to the darkened library, I grabbed my Bible, selected five candles, and then sat cross-legged in the middle of a large Persian rug. I lit each candle, placing them in a circle around my person, and there I continued desecrating the Bible while the storm screamed throughout that ill-gotten night.

Fuck god!

Bruce Stirling John Knox

Hail thy-fucking-self!

I made it to Psalms by two in the morning. The rain had mostly blown itself out by then, but the wind was relentless. I stumbled back up to Rachel's distant bedroom – only to find the fucking door was locked! Well, don't I feel like a denied whore! Wandering naked, I once again found that all the other doors were bolted shut. It felt as though my consciousness was floating disembodied, as I walked through such darkness. Unable to see my own feet, it seemed like my vision was adrift in vacuums of neglect. Until the path led into a random room upon the third floor. Ancient furniture stood in the morbid glow from the slithers of windows. That's if you could even call it a glow. The night outside was only slightly less blackened than it was in there with me. I stepped up to the drapes and rested my head against the dusty cloth. The landscape outside was indistinguishable from a world of coal. Everything below had forsaken the lights of civilization, just as above, the restless sky hung utterly hopeless. That was when I saw them! Down there in the shallow garden next to the edge of the cliff, I saw figures! Individuals standing in a circle. Despite the sheer black, I was very much aware that they were all staring straight back at me. And then I smiled. Statues. Of course, they were just statues. No one ever sees me in here.

BOOM!

I twisted. Waiting. Listening. Nothing.

BOOM!

What the fuck was that shit?!

BOOM!

It was coming from downstairs!

I moved toward the door – when suddenly a loud snarl rose from behind another door to my left. It then rattled violently as something slammed against the other side! Unconsciously, I lunged at the shuddering door, yelling as loud as my broken larynx would vent, “Go fuck yourself!” The door went silent. So, I grabbed the handle – when what sounded like a dog began growling from behind. The door was locked, but I punched at it out of pure intolerance! Being as naked as a sinner, I stood stroking the paneling with my hand while listening to that thing as it clawed at the other side. I then proceeded to take a piss on the floor. The puddle extended under the barrier between us, clearly marking my fucking territory. In turn, the grunting slowly faded.

BOOM!

That distant sound was like something really fucking heavy being dropped on something wooden that wasn't handling the stress. As if a giant battering

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ram was trying to free itself from some place rather unpleasant. It echoed all about the house as I marched back the way that I thought I had come. I quickly found however, I was nowhere familiar. The mansion was a fucking labyrinth. It seemed like the old house had had extensions built onto the original foundations, thereby leaving uneven hallways and strangely low ceilings. I soon found myself where several different generations of extensions had come together, but that still didn't explain why this section of the architecture was so utterly fucked. I went down and around a claustrophobic passageway, then up a step, over a bump, around a stone pillar, past a crack of a window, ducked under an arch, tripped over my own two feet, and then kissed the fucking floor!

Getting to my knees, I spotted another doorway further along that tunnel that opened of its own accord. Crawling to my feet, I stomped toward the door, just as it slammed shut right in my face! I grabbed the doorknob and bashed that cunt wide open – only to be struck by a freezing wind. A broken window sneered at me from where a branch had long ago penetrated the house. Shaking my head, I was about to walk away, when a glint of light bounced off something on the wall. I took a moment. It was a dagger. A Sgian-dubh. The kind Scotsmen kept tucked in their sock. My father once had a collection of the nasty looking knives. I should have kept them after his death. So, I took this one instead.

Somehow, I found the central staircase, and when I made it to the front door, I heard that BOOM once more! It was coming from the library! I unsheathed that short blade and walked calmly to where my clothes still lay with Rachel's bra and panties. But there was no sign of anything causing such a noise. No, there was something different. The clocks were all ticking. I stood right next to the grandfather clock as I slowly looked about that darkened space. There must have been half a dozen hand-wound clocks now ticking at different intervals and with various intensities. Maybe I had just never noticed them earlier. Rachel had probably wound the clocks before I arrived this evening. Seemed logical. Fuck it. Who gives a shit about clocks. So, I went to grab my pants – when that thing crashed down right behind me with a deafening explosion! BOOM!

It was the fucking grandfather clock! It shattered upon impact with the floor as if it had been dropped from the second level! I cringed and backed the fuck away as that tall coffin-like case splintered apart like a tree struck by invisible lightning. My brain was really straining to come up with any kind of fucking rational explanation for this little motherfucker. Though ultimately, I

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knew there was only one fucking culprit.

I went storming up the main staircase and found Rachel's bedroom door was wide open. Stepping inside, I found her 'asleep'. Yeah, right! I ripped her blanket away, and saw her lying face-down, spread-eagle. I loved that ass of hers. Creeping up over her, I had my knees on either side of her warm hips. I still had the knife in my hand as I glared at her pale skin. Her face was lying on its left side. Pushing my left palm firmly against her skull, I placed the tip of the blade against her tender throat. It was so easy. Just apply a fraction more pressure. But she slept on. Her breathing was slow and deep. REM sleep. I was disgusted. This explains and excuses nothing! And then I don't know what happened. The room grew even darker. It was as if a black cloud filled the air. An abominable blindness that was wretched and full of rage. And I loved it. Maybe I was blacking out. Yet I could feel the blackness breathing upon my skin.

I woke up the next morning and found myself alone in Rachel's bed. To my surprise, there was no blood anywhere, despite the dreams I'd had and the fact that my knife was still in my hand. Dreams that were golden with atrocity.

A couple of hours later, on Sunday morning, I typed this in the hotel lounge. From here I can see Rachel in the dining room as I sip on my tea. She glanced at me as if I was any other guest. But of course, that's all I am. I'm just another magician in hermit's clothing, though, I can still smell her cunt on my fingertips. My only regret from this vacation is that I didn't take a single photograph of Rachel. I wish I had recorded a video of her licking my erection while staring longingly into my fucking eyes.

ENTRY 8.

It's after 9pm this Sunday evening. I'm sitting in the hotel lounge while two Russian-sounding bar-girls chat on Skype, as a third waitress browses Ebay. There had always been Wi-fi available at the hotel, but I've had no interest in connecting to the outside world with any of its past associations. Only when in complete isolation from all reputations and illusions of external expectations can you walk with your own true-will. Or as another wise man once said, "*Be yourself, by yourself.*" I am vile and loathsome and repugnant to the core. And I find it all quite superb. Patience and social politeness are lies. Truth is ugly in its smothering entirety. So, I delight in the lies, but relish

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the underlining obscenities kept hidden. Kept safe. Kept tucked away. Kept to myself.

I spent the day focused on defiling the Holy Bible. Sitting on the broken bridge, I busied my scornful little self. A few random tourists and the odd pensioner happened by, but how could they know what I was really doing.

It began to rain at one point, so I moved under the cover of trees, and continued my violations. Whether you stand face to face, or alone in the woods, your demons are your own to deal with. But who ultimately reigns over whom? This was not what I had hoped this vacation would become, but capricious experiences are always intriguing with the process of how I will deal with the situation. Left to myself, I saw all others as hosts to victimize. For they always will, and always have, left me alone to rot.

I had some shortbread for lunch, and then continued with my disciplined desecration of the Holy Bible in my peaceful room without intrusion.

At just after 6pm, I reached the New Testament, so I took a break.

Rachel served me dinner. After which, I skimmed through the photos in my smartphone. Ah, all those pretty girls I've had fun with. Glancing out the dining room windows at the mountain forest, I realized that I would have no time to scale the south-side mountain. I had other plans once the tainting the Bible was complete. There's always more to do. And then I noticed one of the other waitresses: blonde with big tits. See, there's always more.

While sitting comfortably in the lounge, I listened to Nick Cave *And The Bad Seeds, And No More Shall We Part*, and came to appreciate how appropriate that song was for my time at the loch. Yet how many times have I felt this empty sensation in my chest brought on by someone that I had once loved. Loved and lost. I must remind myself that she never made me feel anything, only I affect myself! We were always apart and never together, even when I was inside of her.

Anger is a better construct than sadness! I had no time and no use for sadness, so I returned to my room to spite Matthew, Mark, Luke, and fucking John. Fuck you all!

ENTRY 9.

Ten minutes before my last midnight at the loch, I finished *The Great Indignation* – of the Holy Bible.

I got dressed and walked straight out of the hotel into another indigo night. The street was wet while the sky was overcast, though, nowhere

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near as black as the woods. I passed the graveyard with a sneer of growing belligerence and reached that last street lamp at the crest of the road. It was all downhill from there. Down to the endarkened loch. I couldn't wait to see the surface of the water in the absence of sunlight. Onward I marched with the Bible firm in hand. The further I went down the road, the more my contempt boiled in my chest. Memories filled my head of when I was seventeen and walking home in the small hours with absolutely nothing to look forward to. It was quiet all around. No birds, no bugs, just the wind rustling in those fucking trees that loomed everywhere about me. Soon I marched down that driveway leading off from the road, past that white mansion of stone, and onward with devils whispering in my ear – when suddenly something lurched within the bushes to my left! Instinctively I snapped sideways with clenched fists as I slammed both feet hard onto the gravel! Glaring savagely into that impenetrable forest, I snorted through flared teeth, as I heard that thing run off through the dry leaves and up into the hill. It didn't go far. I wanted to fucking kill it! I didn't know what it was, but I wanted it dead by my own two bloody hands! Disappointed, I became fucking enraged that that thing, that threat, that physical-metaphor had just run the fuck away. So, I continued stomping down the driveway until I came to that other dirt road leading directly to the water's edge.

There she lay, pale and shimmering. Loch Ness by night. With no one else keeping us company, I knew she was all mine. For these things I must do by myself. See for myself. In order to make them mine. Make her mine!

I opened the Holy Bible and flicked through each and every page. There I witnessed my handy work in the meek light. Simply another worthless act of sacrilege produced by my own devices. Yet these acts were not worthless if value was made meaningful by the very motivation behind the commitment. It was important to none other than myself. Crouching on the hushed shoreline of the loch, I cupped the water in my right hand, and then held that indignant Bible upside-down in my left. Thus, I baptized it with spite!

These things I do to myself. And once it's done, I am still here. Why do you climb a mountain? To see the view, but mostly to see what you've done with yourself. Looking over the loch, I saw things in my head. Things I knew weren't there. Things not of this world. Devils of my own invoking. There may have been no Loch Ness monster, but there were undeniably beasts that swam within myself! I then whispered, "Does this change me? Does this change me? Does this change me?!" Expecting the very water itself to answer, I heard instead, only the trees. I knew I would never see this place

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again, so turned my back on the water's edge with hatred saturating my every breath. Marching back up the driveway, I glared at those blackened woods and listen for unknown things hidden in their depth. But nothing came. And I knew, I knew it in my fucking bones, that it is they who were now afraid of me! "I am the son of man! I am the son of man! I am the son of man!" I kept repeating over and over with venom. My hands gripped that corrupted Bible so tight that I wanted to beat a fucking saint to death with it! Slowly scanning the tree trunks, I needed something to challenge me! I wanted some-terrible-fucking-thing to try and rip me limb from limb! Any-fucking-thing at all! But in my lucid mind, I knew that there was absolutely nothing threatening out there for me. For I am the son of man, and it is nature that is timid! I was the worst thing in that fucking glen – a human-fucking-being! And that infuriated

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me no end! “This is not my home! I don’t have a fucking home!” I spat resentfully. Returning to the main road, I continued muttering incessantly, “I am the son of man! I am the son of man! Man: god’s one true regret!”

Eventually, I reached that street lamp next to the graveyard. My body was shaking with a rage, and I realized that tears were running down my cheeks. I guess they’re right about anger being the same as sadness. I owed honesty only to myself. But I was so pissed off, that I couldn’t even fucking walk straight! Stumbling up the parking lot, I took a seat on the front porch of the dead calm hotel. Collecting my thoughts, I was fucking livid! Why hadn’t god struck me down? Why hadn’t I just walked into the fucking loch and never turned back? Because there was always more to do! So what other personal atrocities could I do to my own piece of shit soul? What more torment could I put myself through? And I spoke aloud again, “Does this change me? Yes! ‘Cause there is nothing else beyond me! There is nothing beyond me! There is nothing beyond what I fucking perceive!” There is nothing out there that is not just a projection of my mind! There is no sin that I deem offensive! No virtue that I see exempt from reproach! I am, after all: the fucking son of man! Just like all of you – wickedness born of flesh! Innocence and purity were put here to be abashed! Dignity was a porcelain mask worn by a child-whore after her plump lips had been cut off and stapled around her anus so that we could all make-believe that sodomizing her was just as glorious as ejaculating down her pubescent peach fuzz! Everyday lies were what we all told ourselves in order to rationalize the sheer enormity of our immoral fucking existence! You say, ‘lies’. I say, ‘lip gloss’.

Returning to my room, I typed up these recollections while my eyes dried out. And then my phone rang. It was Rachel. She sounded as if she was crying and begged me to pick her up from The Old Grahams house. It was 1:32am by then. If this was a booty call, she didn’t exactly sound horny. However, after my fuming midnight pilgrimage, I had no inclination for sleep. Women: my worst weakness!

ENTRY 10.

It’s just gone 11am on Monday morning. I have already checked-out of my room and I’m sitting in the hotel lounge typing this up. Outside there are brief moments of sunshine which continually fade behind those ever-returning clouds. I have two hours before I catch the bus back to Inverness, where I’ll travel by train to Edinburgh. But all I can think about, is what happened last

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night.

After my midnight at the loch, Rachel phoned sounding frantic. However: a crying female is a lying female! Yet still, I went up to see what the fucking problem was, out of sheer insomnia. I'd become quite familiar with the steep path up the mountainside in the pitch black. There was no rain this time. But, it seemed as though The Old Grahams place was constantly being battered by gales, no matter what the hour. And there I found Rachel dressed in little more than a singlet, panties, and socks, huddling outside the house next to the drooping trees.

"Cold enough for you?" I asked, as she ran into my arms, trembling and sobbing. I remained unresponsive to her insecurities. Slowly, I pulled my jacket off and put it over her shoulders as she clung to me for dear life. She was fucking petrified. I had one of those relative moments of reflection: as a kid I always admired my father for being a rock of fearless certainty. Whenever I was frightened out of mind, I knew that he was laughing at my terror. Now I was finally filling his shoes.

"Please, take me away," Rachel whispered. "I can't go back in there. Please!"

Perplexed, I glanced up at the lightless building.

"Please! Let's just go. Please!"

Looking at Rachel's socks, and knowing the murderous path I had just scaled, I replied, "Do I look like I'm going to carry your ass all the way down? Where are your shoes, for fuck's sake? And for that matter, where the fuck are your pants? What the fuck are you doing out here?"

"Please!" she strained to keep her voice down.

"Fine, you stay out here. I'll get your stinking shoes – but I'm taking it out on your ass later—"

"No!" She grabbed me tighter.

Impatiently clenching my jaw, I glared at the loch far below.

"It's... I... I just can't... Don't...," she stuttered incoherently.

I pulled away, holding Rachel's shoulders in both hands. "Sorry, I don't speak retard."

"Are you really a priest?"

I turned my back on her and started to walk away. Why had I even fucking bothered coming up here?

"Wait!" Rachel cried out, as she stumbled on the rough gravel. "Please!"

I heard her trip and fall, but I saw something further along the path that drew my eye. Was it a tree-stump? Another highland cattle? I was about to

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disregard it – until it stood straight up with the clear silhouette of a man. The figure was about twenty meters away, and he had no feet! No fucking feet at all! I mean he literally faded out. A black torso that went transparent below the knees.

“No!” Rachel screeched, as another figure rose up closer within the garden. It too was blackened, naked, and standing still. I stared fascinated at that second thing. It seemed to be emanating some kind of smoke. Taking a moment, I examined how impressive my delusions had truly become. They were fully realized, self-determining hallucinations! The power of the mind is incredible! Then Rachel shrieked! Seriously, that girl had some fucking issues. She grabbed my arm, as I saw several other figures spontaneously surround us. These things were just figments of my imagination that I’ve visualized many times before in my art. However, I admired how rational and calm I was at this unexpected confrontation with my own psychotic break.

But it turned out they weren’t just in my head, Rachel was shitting herself in their presence! Screaming, crying, and babbling complete hysterical nonsense, she dropped to the ground, clawing at my legs.

Whatever those things were, they started closing in.

Decision: move! Grabbing Rachel, I dragged her feeble limbs back to the house. She squirmed as those figures came for us, so I picked her up in both arms and carried her up the stairs, and through the wide open front door. There I paused, looking back at that gathering of blackened figures with deformed features, and heard one of them sneer vulgarly with a voice that was not exactly human. I immediately dumped Rachel on the floor and slammed the front door shut! Locking it, I headed toward the fuse box. Finding the main switch, I flipped it. But nothing happened. No light. Nothing. You son of bitch! I scanned around. Fuck this shit! But then I felt breath on the back of my neck. I slowly took a step and turned face to face with one of those things. It was black. Without detail. No eyes or anything. Like a black-hole that smoked around the edges. It breathed like a distressed horse in slow motion. Was it really there? Studying that thing standing only a foot from my person, I watched as it raised both hands toward me. And I asked in a mock tone, “Are you the devil?”

“Are... You... The... Devil...,” that thing replied, with a voice best summed up in the word: disturbing! It reached for me, but I had had enough of this bullshit, so I advanced faster, stepping right through that unclean thing! Wow! That was a fucking experience! Like being dropped head-first into freezing water. Invigorating! Unfortunately though, then the pain came! The

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cold took a second to seep into my nervous-system before I dropped to my knees and hunched over in agony! It was like that feeling when the dentist pokes an exposed nerve with that metal prick-like instrument. It stung like that throughout my entire fucking body! Absolutely fucking breath-taking! But you know what they say about cold showers, they wake you the fuck up! My eyes bulged as I pressed my forehead hard against the floor. Jesus fucking Christ!

Then footsteps. The floorboards around me creaked and groaned. Struggling to gain control of my faculties, I saw footprints appear on the dust-coated wood. I saw imprints from bare feet, as well as markings that I simply couldn't recognize. Yet there was nothing there. Not until I looked up from my misery and found myself totally encircled by those silhouetted things. Of course, it was I who held the keys to the bottomless pit, so let us rejoice at my suffering! I was responsible for this encounter! Though, then again, how are any of us responsible for how fate plays out in the end? We all evolved from great giants that came before us, and we're set on a path laid out by destiny long before we were even conceived. Was that why I still felt no guilt?

Then, over the breathing of that multitude of jinn, I heard Rachel's cries of delirium. I couldn't help but smile. The circle broke and those passive-aggressive shadows of the ugliest black parted so that I could witness the torment of that poor little fucking waitress. Getting to my feet, I felt the cold pass from my body as my blood began to course with acid! I was burning within! My bones had become brimstone, and my flesh was on fire inside! I had to get free on my clothes. My skin was cooking. Stripping naked in a fury, I shook my feverish arms and legs while trying to watch Rachel as she was lifted off the ground by other unseen powers! She was held high, as if crucified upon some invisible cross, and her own clothes were then torn apart! More and more of those inhuman things crept out of the very fucking ceiling and corners. Bestial creatures that came with a great hunger. Here they beheld the meat for the sacrifice. All predators were the same. Either alive or abominable, they were all carnal carnivores. And I moved through those devils with the same lust. Some slithered out of my way as I crept closer to the front door where Rachel was impossibly suspended. All science-taught understanding and resistance to the supernatural was behind me. I had neglected the material trappings of my forefathers. Rachel screamed and lashed out as she was tugged at by demonic hands. Her silky white body was then scratched so viciously that her blood began to rain down. I could see exactly where her extremities were being held by those invisible hands. I saw

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it all. Savoring every discernible detail of her and of those translucent forms that were fading in and out of existence. Listening to the cracking sounds of Rachel's bones being pulled out of their joints, I paid particular attention to the extreme horror on her face which made it all so much more marvelous! The gathering soon became violent, thrashing and howling. Animalistic shrieks filled the room like a tortured frustration knowing that they could no longer remember how to form the very fucking words they needed in order to express their endless fucking anger! Anger! Those things stank of hatred! No mercy, no pity, or any concept of sympathy was felt for that fucking female! Only her anguish gave us any fucking pleasure! So, we all screamed, demanding that her guts be ripped from her vessel of weakness – but it was her legs that were pried apart. Opened wide and exposed to all.

BOOM!

Suddenly there was that same thunderous impact that I had heard the night before. I felt it strike through my chest like a shotgun blast! Rachel dropped to the floor like a dead body. She lay strewn, no more pretty than a rag doll. I remained on all fours and then found myself quite alone. All that darkness had vanished the moment that great collision had filled the high-ceiling chamber of the entrance. It was interesting how bright an empty room can seem at night once the devils choose to hide themselves away. Twisting, I glared up at the staircase landing overlooking the entrance. A girl stood up there. She had wild hair and was draped in a pale sheet that was almost transparent to her naked body. In her right hand she held a long spear. It was about the length of a javelin, with beads and ornaments hanging from the bladed top. For some reason she seemed fucking familiar, so I rose to my feet. She stared at me with revulsion and began muttering something in a strange language. I don't know what the fuck it was about that spear, but I fucking wanted it like no lover I've ever stalked! Without thinking, I charged up the stairs in a rage, as if that cunt had stolen the spear from me in my sleep! Suddenly there was a stomping at the top of the staircase, and some creature with great horns and massive shoulders materialized as black as that eclipsed horde. It blocked my path, but I didn't give a flying fuck about its snarling threats, and despite the pain from before, I shoved straight through its lack of physical form! Again, I dropped like a stone to my hands and knees in utter shock! But I couldn't contain my unrelenting 'want' for that glorified stick in the woman's grasp. Coughing against my shredded throat, I crawled onward. That self-righteous female however, turned with insult in her eyes toward my obnoxious presence. My hand reached greedily toward her. I wasn't thinking.

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I just wanted! I had to take it! The impulse was that basic. But suddenly she held the spear above her head with both hands – and then slammed its blunt end down on the floor!

BOOM!

Doors burst open! Framed pictures fell from the walls! I'm sure a grenade going off in your mouth felt softer than this kick to my guts! As I was blown away, some big black dog leaped out of nowhere onto my fucking back! I grabbed that prick, slamming it into a wall! Clutching its paws, I swung it right over the fucking banister and it plummeted to the floor below. For the moment that it flew through the air, I realized that it wasn't any dog. It was the right size for a Doberman, but it was some mutilated thing with stumps on its back and had a head more like a pig-sized tapeworm. Pushing away from the balcony, I lunged at the spear in that female's grip – she didn't move an inch. Instead, she thumped me in the chest like I was a fucking loaf of bread! I kid you not, I literally flew back off my useless feet and into another fucking wall! Dropping to my naked ass, I gagged for air. All this crap was really beginning to knock the shit out of me. I just needed to catch my breath, but I was already crawling again. I needed that spear! I needed it beyond belief, and I drove over that new-found threshold of pain. I wanted what I fucking wanted! But the girl struck me across my back as I came slithering on my belly! I wasn't going anywhere after that. It felt like a ten-ton weight upon my shoulder-blades. Managing to turn my head, I scowled up at that fucking bitch, just as she pushed her bare foot right down on my face. She then began grinding my skull into the floor, and the pressure on my back pushed down harder still. I could hear the floorboards straining below, or maybe it was my ribs breaking. Even though she was crushing me to death, I kept reaching for that metal spear. Suddenly I saw those blackened figures surrounding again. Watching those individuals without legs emerge from the very air, it seemed to me that they came back just to witness my destruction. They wanted to hear my confession of how I had now replaced Rachel. I had become the sacrifice. The meat offering.

But.

I am the son of man!

I am the son of man!

I am the fucking son of man!

My jaw began clenching, not from the pain, but with fucking intolerance!

Fuck acceptance! Fuck passivity! Fuck this shit!

With both hands, I grabbed that foot pinning my head down, and I took a

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fucking bite right out of her sole! You should have heard her scream. She was then immediately torn away, and I was set free. Rolling on my side, I realized that it was Rachel who had the upper hand. She was using a mounted trophy of stag-horns to beat the living shit out of that other female! Things happened fast. Rachel was knocked down. I didn't plan on catching her fall, she just happened to land on me as I lunged at the other girl, who moved with insane speed. She was somehow, with one giant stride, at the far end of the balcony. Rachel and I reached for her. Instantaneously, that unknown female moved around a corner and vanished down the corridor. I was fucking infuriating! This must have been how cats felt about laser-pointers. As I went running after that fleeting bitch, Rachel grabbed my arm.

"Don't!" she begged, trying to hold me back, "It's not worth it! Please! Just leave it!"

I tore my fucking arm loose, and cared nothing for her pleading, as I threw myself further down that fucking house of deprecation! Smashing my fists into every-fucking-thing I came across, I ran faster. I was having the ultimate fucking tantrum! Ripping paintings off walls, I bashed lampshades to fucking pieces! I had regressed to a fucking caveman. Stomping past open doors where more of those blackened figures lurked, I spat at them! Lifting a small set of drawers, I heaved it straight at the head of this old man with a hunchback! The drawers shattered apart, and the old man merely looked away. I'm pretty fucking sure that was Satan himself. I knew it was him intuitively, like I knew my own fucking name. That was when, the floor became a mass of bloody, severed limbs. The walls were now the stone of an angular cave with the roots of dead trees growing right out of them. The fucking ceiling went up forever. Dozens of black snakes hissed among the rotten arms and legs, trying to sink their fangs into my ankles, but I kept going. Ducking between roots and fighting my way through an entanglement of noose-like tentacles, I found that the path forked in three directions: there was an opening straight ahead leading into a tight darkness, a door to my right, and a stairwell to my left behind a locked iron gate. I chose left. Venting my lungs as I shook that gate, my hands actually broke that son of a bitch clean off its fucking hinges! A dismembered hand from the floor then grabbed my calf! I brought the heavy gate right down on those disembodied limbs like the mother of all guillotines!

Down I went. Up came the stench of human piss and shit, until I was knee-deep in that cold wet sewage. It was a pitch-black place with nothing and nowhere to go. Though, it was by no means quiet down there. Constant echoes moved all around, yet my breathing was louder. I stood there, glaring

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into the void. Fists at my sides. Hoping that a rock would drop onto my fucking head. But nothing killed me. Something then moved to my right. Something in the liquids of this subterranean swamp. Tilting my head, I watched as it slowly swam around me. It was big and long. Fucking big. There was only a dim, fractured light coming from the stairwell, but enough to reveal the whale-sized shape of the thing as it moved smoothly ahead of me. It then raised its elongated head from its broad body. When it finally turned, I saw enormous jaws stretching open like the mouth of an alligator. Yet it didn't face me. It just rose up as if to glance back and see if I would follow. I did nothing. Just studied its dripping silhouette as fear finally consumed me. A dreadful sensation expanded within my chest, had I gone too far? Was this the confrontation that I really wanted? Yes! Yes, it was! Fuck the Loch Ness monster, I have seen the great Ammit! In that moment of conviction against desperation, the creature sank back into the endless filth, continuing further into the deep. And once again, I was absolutely alone.

Then screaming came from my left! I found a faint glow coming from a different corner in that ancient cavern. There was another staircase. The shriek intensified and the distress in the female's voice was an aphrodisiac. So, I dragged my way through that tar-like sludge and climbed a stone staircase. The screeching grew shriller the higher I went. It hadn't felt like I had gone down that many steps on the descent to that sewer of human abhorrence, but now it was like scaling the spiral staircase within the Wallace Monument. Up and up and up and up and up and – I slammed into a solid door! Shoving it open, I fell awkwardly into an attic that was loud with the trampling rain upon its roof. That screaming however, was entirely understandable once I saw that unknown female being disemboweled by unseen claws in midair! Both of her arms and both legs were suddenly torn from her torso! An explosive burst of blood sprayed forth from her silenced throat! Transparent devils finally decapitated her, and her head struck the wooden floor with a loud, bowling-ball-like THUMP! I glanced about as a circle of blackened figures became visible next to me, but they were transfixed by the blood spreading across the floor. I could see where their invisible feet stood as the blood pooled around them. From what I could tell, some of those figures had the ability of becoming half-visible, yet it was the unseen demons that possessed the real strength to actually tear living meat to fucking pieces. Some entities were not meant for mortal eyes, and true danger is what you cannot prepare yourself for. As I approached that ungodly circle, I found that the dismembered female's spear was nowhere to be seen. Stepping right into the midst of the

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circle, those devils clearly weren't happy about my fucking presence, until I crouched and reached into the tattered remains of the dead girl's belly. Mmm, still warm. Her blood had that familiar, coarse texture on my fingertips, the foul fucking shit that it is. That circle of fucks then tried to close in on me, but I heard something else outside. Walking straight through one of those figures, I hardly felt a fucking thing this time. Rubbing my hot palm across a grimy window in that A-frame attic, I stared down at the thin stretch of garden in front of the house. Rachel was out there. Outside in the rain. She was doing something. She was with something. I spun, disregarding those contemptuous spirits. I'm sure I went out the same door I came in, but the staircase was new, yet down I went.

I reached the front door in record time, discovering that the entire entrance was utterly alive with insects! I saw my pile of clothes not too far into that overwhelming infestation, so I shuffled my shit-coated feet through that flood of bugs and scooped up my jeans and shoes. Shaking them clean, I quickly dressed. I lost my shirt to a five-foot-long centipede with the head of a bat and eyes of a giant spider. Nothing was natural about anything anymore. Once I had my shoes on, I crunched my way across the masses of beetles and other nasty little invertebrates. However, I was only half way across the large room, when I heard a soft voice say, "Father." As those insects had already begun crawling up my legs, I kept moving, though saw a child no more than three-years-old standing naked in the middle of all those swarming critters. The kid blinked at me with big, black eyes, when what looked like a tentacle rose out of the insects. That giant headless serpent slid around that child's pale body, and before I could react, the kid was crushed like a rat in a fucking trap! The tiny body splintered as bones punctured the skin. I smirked and kept going. The wind was blowing hard as fuck, and it took all the strength I had left to force open that fucking door. Glancing back, just as the door slammed shut, I saw that the entire chamber was now full of dozens and dozens of naked, blood-soaked females. Every one of them was missing their fucking head – it was unequivocally beautiful!

Turning from the sealed front door, I looked up just in time to see Rachel cry out in ecstasy! She was being lifted high and raped by a cluster of things that I couldn't tell head from tail! They were not humanoid in any sense. Fornicating and stabbing at that meek girl, those devils attacked as a myriad of lion-sized leeches. Convulsing, they writhed in a towering column of wet black flesh. Talons and long sharp extremities whipped about in a frenzy. My first impression was that Rachel was being eaten alive, but she was loving

Loch-Fucking-Ness

it. I saw her face flash between the bodies of those creatures. Again, she screamed out – just like she had when it was I who was fucking her. So, I stood topless in the freezing rain with my back to the house, watching this infernal pornography as I wondered what the fuck had become of that spear?

“Bruce!” Rachel called out, but her voice had come from behind me. Turning, I found that the front door was gone, in fact the entire front wall of the house didn’t exist anymore, and out came those females. Headless and crawling on all fours, they swarmed past me. Down either side of the two front stairs, they filled the entire garden around those copulating demons. They kept coming. Endless headless whores. Looking beyond that twenty-foot-tower of inhuman perversion, I scanned the distant loch. The rain moved in vast waves of mist. Both the distant and surrounding forests then spoke to me. The entire fucking valley, mountains, and loch revealed its ultimate self. The abominations were unfathomable! Hell was in the shadow of the Earth! The son of Osiris had failed! Apep had devoured the sun! And I fucked Rachel upon an altar of the spilled guts of the seven-headed dragon! I was utterly saturated in visions of mutilation and tortured females! Everything was screaming! Screaming hateful lust and envy! The landscape was consumed with an infinite mass of blackened forms. And then, beasts so towering that only their knees reached through the storm clouds, came closer with deafening footsteps! Yet above and beyond, they opened their great jaws and spoke of the most ancient of calamities! I could see it all. The very ground was diseased flesh, bleeding and crippled with the teeming parasites of wicked descent. And I was one of them. One with them!

I am the fucking son of man!

-

I woke up later that morning in my hotel room, with Rachel in the shower. Sitting on the edge of the bed, still caked in mud and other crap, I didn’t care about how I had gotten back there in one piece. When Rachel stepped out of the bathroom, she never said a word as she looked me dead in the eye. Maliciously glaring back, I too had nothing to say. She dressed and walked out with secrets in her stride. I would most likely never see her face again. But her kind of meat is cheap. The human-filler kind.

ENTRY 11.

While I stood on the side of the road waiting for the bus to Inverness, I looked back up at the ridge, behind the hotel, to where The Old Grahams house was

Bruce Stirling John Knox

hidden in that steep forest. Somewhere in all those trees and shadows, I had thrown a set of drawers at old man Satan.

The bus ride was quiet, and I soon spotted Boleskine House on the east coast of the loch. Had Crowley seen these things too?

While I was queuing at the train station at Inverness, I stood next to a cluster of four dustbins where I saw what suddenly made me freeze. I then realized why that strange female's face was so fucking familiar last night. I had seen this same missing-persons poster when I had arrived here four nights ago. According to the details, her name had been Yulia Solodyankina. She looked a lot cuter in that poster than when she was trying to grind my face into the fucking floor. But what the fuck was she doing at The Old Grahams house? Did Rachel even know who she was? Ah, who gives a fuck! She was



Loch-Fucking-Ness

just another discarded fucking female!

I spent the whole train ride back to Edinburgh watching the scenery go by. This might have been my Fatherland, but it wasn't my fucking home. Nowhere was. Yet everything was mine to contaminate. I am Bruce Stirling John Knox!

I stayed one last night with my old aunt, where I faked my manners and we avoided talking of my ex.

-

On Tuesday, I flew back to Berlin where I was met by the nineteen-year-old blonde at the airport. I fucked her the moment we got back to my place.

Later, I lay in bed, staring at the ceiling with that little teenager asleep on my arm. They say every single cell in your body is replaced every ten years, therefore, whatever inner child I once had been was no longer here, yet I was still alive despite walking freely into the heart of true fucking darkness. The young blonde then moaned in her sleep, and I thought of all those other females and their attraction toward me. Couldn't they find a better man? No! Because... We... Are... All... Evil! 'She' is the devil in me, just as I am the devil fucking her.

The external world should have stopped me. I was defenseless. But what is the external world but an extension of the internal. Or was it the other way around?

Bruce

Bruce Stirling John Knox



SHORT STORY 5
2014
NATALIE PORTMAN & I

DISCLAIMER:

None of this happened. You're not even reading this.

Leaning back in my desk chair, I finished reading an e-mail, and then looked out my open window where leafy vines framed the abyss beyond. Eventually, I returned to my laptop. Once I read the e-mail again, I paused even longer, before clicking 'reply'. All I wrote was, "*Too bad it's too late.*"

'Send'.

Without another thought, I turned up Soulfly, *No Hope = No Fear*, and made myself a cup of Earl Grey. By the time I sat back at my desk, I found that I already had new message in my Inbox, from Sasha Marber at IMC Agency. With a suspicious eyebrow, I opened the e-mail. It was brief, asking why it was too late, as they were still in Berlin until tomorrow morning. I drank my tea slowly. Fine, I'll play this little game, it's not like I really had any other plans this evening – except *Bark*. Always with *Bark*. Nothing going on in my life but *Bark*. So, I replied.

After ten minutes of on-line chit-chat, I was out my door and walking down the humid streets toward the closest taxi-stand. What can I say, her argument convinced my curiosity. I'm a sucker. But ultimately, any excuse to get outside was a good one. I'd just finishing the artwork for Chapter 6 of Part 2 of my *Bark* trilogy, the official half way point, and in my isolation, there was no celebration, only continuation.

As I sat in the taxi, heading to Unter Den Linden, the situation got me thinking about the European Elections that had been held today, Sunday, May 25th 2014. The idea that once you've cast your vote, you can then maintain some form of control over that particular liar in office, seemed ludicrous to me. Throughout history, political parties did whatever they liked after the power had been granted to them, completely regardless of their promises and ideals. Yet people continued having faith in a system full of the illusion of control, for the arrogantly hopeful validation of their individual importance. Which reminded me of the end of last year, while in London, I had been walking past Saint Paul's Cathedral, and down Fleet Street at rush hour. There, I suddenly recalled a similar thought I'd had in 1998 when I lived in Tokyo. In both city states, I'd been surrounded by vast masses of people,

Natalie Portman & I

and I knew none of them. Those places didn't even know that I existed, yet they continued functioning self-sufficiently. And if I didn't need to be there, then what did it matter if I made one or two of those complete strangers also disappear. These violent thoughts never ended. They were part of me, or was I simply part of them. After all, my consciousness was a passenger along for the ride in the taxi of my reptile brain. I'm an insect responding to stimuli, the mere sum of my past experiences, with no say in what body I was born into and with no choice in what I became or where I was going. So, I followed my true-will in my unconscious taxi that I was supposedly in control of, just to see where this spiral would lead. However, if I'm wrong about tonight's invitation, then what does that say about any of my life-choices? That I'm nothing but a parasite on society. But all artists are parasites. Beyond the precept of creating beauty, artists serve no greater use to the survival of the species. We live on the efforts of others. Yet if my art seeks only ugliness, then I must be the worst kind of fucking parasite. Fundamentally, a good parasite wants to live symbiotically with its host. Malaria doesn't actually want to kill you, or it dies too. I am more like cancer: creating shit no one wants with the sadistic goal of seeing everyone suffer. Why should I hope for anyone to better themselves? In fact, why should I even struggle to better myself? I'm already a white male. Apparently, I rule this fucking planet! My life must be fucking perfect! Like a politician in power, I merely seek to perpetuate my tenure. If I fail at everything, I'll still be better than all of you – because you fucking say I am! You've put me on an infallible fucking pedestal. So, I feel no pain, and therefore no fucking compassion. I'm a parasitical-cancer of the worst kind on my way to meet Natalie fucking Portman. My fucking life can't get any fucking better than this fucking bullshit!

The taxi dropped me off outside the hotel Adlon Kempinski, right next to Brandenburg Gate. Glancing across the street at a public bench, I thought of Valentine's Day 2006, when my fiance and I sat there in the sun. Back then I'd heard that Portman was in town for the release of one of her block-busters. She was the actual motivation for bringing my girl out here under the pretense of a romantic lunch. And yet now, eight years later, I was standing on the curb just before midnight, glaring into those five-star golden lights. Invited or fooled, it didn't matter at that point, all I really wanted was a fucking coffee. The old bellhop gave me a weird look as I stood outside like a drunk about to vomit, when I spotted someone inside waving like an excited kid in class who knew all the right fucking answers. I couldn't help glancing around the empty sidewalk in case she was calling to someone else. Nope. It was me.

Bruce Stirling John Knox

The fifty-year-old woman in a scarlet Chanel suit, came out with one of those all-American smiles, so huge it was a wonder that her cheeks didn't explode from the pressure. "Bruce! Bruce, my dear! Such a pleasure to finally meet you. I've heard so much. Come inside. Come inside!"

So, this was Sasha. She acted like a long-lost aunt, desperate to ejaculate years of pent-up, inappropriate affection all over my face within the first thirty seconds of our acquaintance. After vigorously shaking hands, I didn't get a chance to say a single word as she dragged me inside, her arm hooked around my elbow. This was a chick who clearly got shit done her way. I glanced at the bellhop and we shared a moment of what-the-fuck, before I was plunged into a world of perfume-soaked air-conditioning, soft piano-like elevator-music, and hotel staff dressed in uniforms that looked more elite than the combatants of some countries. Sasha led me across the enormous lobby to the sofas near the bar, explaining that we were a little ahead of schedule, so we could just relax for the time being. I'm early? Seriously, I missed her e-mail by a fucking week! What kind of fashionably-fucking-late schedule are they going by? Anyway, I ordered a latte, and sat in a marsh-mellow of a leather armchair across from Sasha. She then let loose a machine-gun-monologue upon my senses. Mostly she went on about their hectic travel plans, and how much she loved some new song hitting the charts in the States. As I finished my coffee, I was distracted by a metallic Hummer pulling up outside the front windows. Two Arabic girls in long black dresses with matching fur shawls stepped out of that wide-load vehicle. A fat rag-head entered the hotel ahead of the girls, while a servant followed like a good slave-boy carrying two tiny mutts. Whoever said equality was a good thing, sure wasn't sitting on top of the food-chain. Sasha kept squawking about her current likes and dislikes, while I focused on those two barely-legal babes in skin-tight black. They both flicked their smooth hair as they sat on the sofas right next to ours. One of them glanced my way with that who-the-fuck-do-you-think-you-are expression. I however, locked my eyes on her fake tits, immediately comparing them to the second girl's cleavage, before returning my judgmental scowl back to her eyes. She was undoubtedly insulted, and that made the evening even sweeter. So, I zeroed-in on the other girl again, just to rub it in. That's when some part of my brain realized that Sasha was waiting for an answer. She'd finally asked me an actual fucking question, "So? How'd you meet Leslie?"

"Leslie?" I asked quietly. "Who's that?"

"Barany. Leslie Barany. Who introduced you two?"

Bewildered, I frowned, when an average Joe in a forgettable suit strolled

Natalie Portman & I

over. Sasha jumped up and rattled-off a list of prioritized miscellaneous orders at this sorry-for-himself looking guy, who didn't so much as acknowledge my presence. Abruptly, Sasha excused herself, and then this guy turned directly toward me, "Sir, you must be Mr. Knox."

I stood and shook his hand. Instantly, I knew this guy was part of someone's security detail. He spoke with one of those clean American accents, articulating himself in a very non-intrusive manner. The kind of guy who could probably break my neck in two seconds if given the go ahead. A real professional. This whole situation had me playing my cards close to my chest, but this guy wasn't interested in small-talk. His name was Jack and apologized while informing me that I had to wait a few more minutes. He too then excused himself. So polite. Definitely ex-military. So, I ordered another coffee and sat comfortably near those two whores thumbing the shit out of their iPhones. Again, I wondered if this was all a set-up, a bad joke, was someone fucking with me. I hadn't seen MTV in years, but maybe this was the new Punk'd. Get an idiot to think he's meeting a famous person, just to pull his pants down and catch him on video with his dick in his hand. Anything for unscrupulous ratings. The more I thought about it, the more legit this theory appeared. It seemed a lot more understandable than what I'd been told so far. Which wasn't a lot. What would Occam's razor have said?

An old guy then stepped over, asking if I had a light as he sat down across from me. With his cravat and spectacles, he reminded me of one of those jolly old chaps who solved murder mysteries on the Nile back in the nineteenth century. While flagging down a waiter, he asked in his gentlemanly English, "Do you visit often?"

"First time," I replied, watching as three taxis arrived all at once. Several young adults then stumbled into the lobby, all high on whatever the fuck the kids were snorting in the clubs these days.

"The history, it's practically visceral," Grandpa Poirot stressed. "Oh, you must see the wall while you're here."

"You mean, The Great Wall?" I mocked.

"My lord, you're thinking of China. Where were you educated, my boy?"

"Wow! You look totally different with hair," a distant voice said with a smile.

Looking up, I finally found the one and only Natalie Portman walking straight toward me.

That old prick and I both rose to our feet as Natalie approached.

"Didn't realize this was a date, my lad. I'll leave you to it." And Santa's

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older brother wandered off, still in search of those long-forgotten matches.

“When did you grow the fro?” Natalie asked, as I shook her hand.

“Since I went celibate, in January,” I replied. “You sure are a fuck-load shorter in reality.”

“I know,” she giggled, slowly looking me up and down. “The camera adds two feet.”

“Why don’t you take a photo, it’ll last longer.”

“Not intimidated, are you?”

“You can eye-fuck the shit out of me all you like – as long as you buy dinner first,” Taking half a step back, I tilted my head, overtly giving her petite figure the once over. She wore slip-ons, jeans, and a casual blouse. “I’ve had worse.”

Natalie literally laughed like a gun shot, and then punched me in the shoulder. “You really know how to compliment a gal,” she said, still beaming with that massive smile of hers.

“It’s not my fault, I have this disease,” I admitted, glancing back at those two sluts pretending not to watch us. “It’s called charm. Terribly infectious. Condoms are useless.”

“Thought I saw a Prince Charming in the guest book,” she played along. “Now the pieces are coming together.”

“Yeah, it’s me. Don’t tell anyone or I’ll punch your face in.”

“Hmm, charming.” She paused. “Indeed.”

“Isn’t that why I’m here?” I whispered, wondering where her bodyguard was lurking. “You sure didn’t invite me for my looks. Have you fucking seen my hair? You think I want to fucking look like this?!”

“Yeah, what went wrong?” Natalie nodded. “Going for the mad-professor-look or something?”

“No, no, no. It’s the I-just-made-sweet-sweet-love-to-the-wall-socket look. Trust me, it’s big in Milan. Sixty-four-thousand volts of awesome,” I calmly confessed, just as my coffee arrived. “Want to sit?”

“Actually, we can have drinks in my suite,” she suggested. “Shall we?”

“After you.”

“See,” she chuckled. “There, you can be charming.”

“I won’t lie, Natalie. Not to you,” I said, while following, “But I’m afraid, that ass of yours, looks fat in those jeans.”

She instantly turned her head, mouth gasping in genuine shock.

“Just saying. Radical honesty. It’s the destruction of every healthy relationship known to man.”

Natalie Portman & I

We stepped into a lift, and the doors shut us in alone. Natalie stood side-on to me as she said, “It’s actually really nice to meet you. Totally not what I was expecting.”

“We could do this whole thing again if you like. I’ll play the shy, introverted artist, afraid of his own fucking shadow. I’ll even piss my pants when we first meet. But scat, now that’ll cost you extra.”

Again, she burst into laughter, and that’s when I caught my first sniff of her hair.

Down a pretty corridor we went.

“It’s just, you seem very... Inaccessible, from your artistic profile.”

“Inaccessible? Me?” I scoffed. “You’re the fucking movie star. You, of all people, should know better. Appearances are deceiving. Just like this whole thing right now. So really, why am I here?”

“Wait. What? Didn’t Sasha tell you?”

“She said a lot of not much.”

“Oh, this is embarrassing.” Natalie stopped dead in the corridor and glanced about the lush carpet as if she had suddenly become all timid and uncomfortable. “See, I have this addiction. It’s actually a medical condition. My family totally understands and supports me... But you see... I’m a sex-addict.”

“Well, shit. No problem,” I laughed. “For a second there, I thought you were about to admit to eating the souls of new born babies – just like my last girlfriend. She liked them with just a little touch of barbecue sauce.”

We both smirked, arriving at her door.

“But seriously... I want you–,” she whispered, leaning up close, pressing her hand against my chest, as she pushed open the door, “–to meet my friends Chloe and Dennis.”

“Mr. Bruce Stirling John fucking Knox! Great to fucking meet you!” Dennis yelled out. He was about forty, French, and unshaven. A very casual looking rich guy, who seemed rather intimate with Natalie. A bit too friendly maybe.

“How are you?” Chloe said, shaking my hand firmly. She was older, gray hair, and looked like she’d just woken up a minute ago. Her accent could have been anything.

“So...,” Natalie said, slowly moving across that large suite full of antique styled modern furniture.

Then there was this abruptly awkward moment of silence where those three, who all seemed like confident people, looked temporarily lost for

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words.

Finally, I stepped up, “So shall I just say it? You have a ‘cease and desist’ order and want me to kindly fuck off with my bullshit, or you’ll sue my ass back into the stone age.”

Everyone looked at me. No one said anything.

“And to think, I left my fucking coffee downstairs for this party.”

“What did Sasha say to you?” Dennis asked.

I inhaled, “Something about some project in pre-production. Co-funded by Israel. You need some concept development. So? So, fucking what?”

“Yes! The project is absolutely happening! Was my idea bringing you on board for the design process. Should really read the script, it’s frightening stuff!” Dennis went on like most directors do, jerking off over their next biggest hit.

I cut him off, “Not interested.”

“Just wait till you get the script!”

“No thanks.”

“Don’t be stupid! This is an incredible opportunity!”

“Not doing that shit anymore.”

“What are you saying? This is ridiculous!”

“This conversation is over.” I wasn’t in the fucking mood to kiss the ass of some cunt that I had no fucking need to appease.

“Hey, let’s talk about this!” Dennis demanded. “Listen, we’ve made a lot of arrangements to meet you here!”

Looking at Natalie, I found her staring intensely back at me from a sofa, “I’m only focusing on the artwork for my book. After that, I’m fucking done wasting my fucking life.”

Natalie’s expression tightened.

“Are you an idiot?!” Dennis laughed, walking toward the suite’s private bar. “Artists don’t just quit and get a day job! Art, it’s a calling!”

“Wow,” I grinned bitterly at that fuck, as he poured himself a vodka. “You really live with your fucking head up your ass, don’t you.”

“Would you look at this guy!” Dennis smirked. “What fucking attitude!”

I turned to Chloe, and she crossed her arms.

“Hey, Bruce!” Dennis persisted. “Work on this project, the connections you’ll make, it’ll set you up for life!”

“Too fucking late,” I replied, glaring at that old woman who never blinked.

“You’re after more money! I love this guy! We got to get him a team to supervise!”

Natalie Portman & I

“Why are you leaving it behind?” Chloe asked.

“That’s really none of your fucking business.”

“What are you going to do then?” Natalie spoke at long last.

“I believe the technical term is: dis-a-fucking-ppear.”

“Where are you going?” Chloe inquired.

I swallowed my growing annoyance. “Away.”

Dennis then came over, handing me a glass of vodka, “You’ll bring a real edge to the whole production. Just look at you, people will shit themselves. He’s perfect!”

“I don’t drink.”

Dennis was oblivious, rambling on about the vibe that needed to be cultivated around his set, keeping the mystique dangerous with the tension high, insisting that they could never reveal what was really going on.

Walking over to Natalie, I placed my glass on the coffee table. “Nice to meet you. See you.”

Natalie looked confused, as I turned my back on her and headed for the door.

Out into the corridor I went.

Into the elevator.

And then out the front door of the hotel.

I doubted that the trains would still be running at such a late hour, so I ignored the stairs down to the U-bahn station and kept walking. It was all just another waste of my fucking time. But hey, I met Natalie Portman, for fuck’s sake! What a foxy little mamma!

“Bruce!” Natalie called out.

I cautiously paused before turning around.

“Sorry. That was weird. The whole situation,” she tried to apologize. “In fact, none of this has gone how I imagined it would. I had assumed—”

“Ah. The mother of all fuck-ups,” I said, spotting Jack standing outside the hotel.

“Sorry. It’s just that...”

“Hey, no problem,” I said, glancing around the empty streets in front of Brandenburg Gate. “Do you want to go get a drink? I know a place not far from here.”

“Thanks, but I can’t leave the hotel, not without... All that,” Natalie smiled with a flicker of frustration. “Do you want to come back in, and I’ll have that coffee with you. No one told me that you don’t drink alcohol. Is that serious?”

“Does someone have to tell you everything about everyone else before

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you meet them for the first time?” I asked. “Do you do even wipe your own ass?”

Natalie’s demeanor shifted again. Changing her stance ever so subtly, she replied, “We both only seem to know as much about each other as we’ve allowed the world to perceive of us.”

“I once heard someone say something about the more you give of your personal life to the outside world, the more it drags you down,” I recalled from fifteen years ago. “Our secrets must be kept secret.”

Natalie Portman & I ended up back in the lobby, sitting at the bar this time.

“You seem like a pretty cool chick,” I said, and Natalie choked on her drink.

“Why do you sound so surprised? Someone tell you I’m a complete cunt?”

“Yeah. The guy at door warned me to watch out for the likes of you. You didn’t tip him. So, he fell over.”

“That joke. No. You seemed so charming until you said that.”

“Would you rather I be a pig? ‘Cause I’ll do it.”

“Wait. You do have a pig mask, don’t you?”

“Of course. Don’t you?” I said, pulling out my phone, showing her some photos of the pig-faced Major Obnoxious. “Jesus Christ! When you laugh, you really go balls-out!”

“Are the neighbors getting upset?” Natalie gasped beneath her hands.

“Why do you care? Is it ‘cause you’re a mother now?”

“Fuck you!”

“Kiss your kid with those lips?”

“Jealous?”

I paused, reminding myself that she was married. “What are you doing in Berlin?”

Natalie glanced away and groaned, “You know, meeting with producers, like Dennis.”

“Thought he was the director.”

“Thankfully no. Likes to stick his nose into other people’s business, but he’s only good for the funding.”

“Meet a lot of people like that?”

“Unfortunately. And fortunately.”

“Sound conflicted. Need a hug?”

“Yes, but not from you.”

“Good. Don’t want to catch the Jew-disease.”

Natalie Portman & I

“There’s that charm again. You must live a lonely life.”

“Every night I sit at my grand piano next to an open window, lace curtains blowing gently in the breeze, as I read Edgar Allan Poe by moon light. I’m slowly going blind, ‘cause it’s fucking impossible to read anything by fucking moon light!”

“We should team up. I’ll play the world’s smallest violin and we can bath in each other’s tears of self-pity.”

“I wish you’d stop laughing at my pain.”

“I can’t help it, your pain is the only thing bringing any joy to my life.”

“Dennis should come down and film the real Natalie Portman: *‘sadist of the noblest blood.’*”

“Definitely not! This is private. Just between us. If you ever tell anyone, I’ll have you killed. And I can do it. I know people. I’m fucking famous!”

Again, I clenched my jaw, and had to reminded myself that she wasn’t actually flirting with me. “So, I hear you’re moving to Paris.”

“Are you stalking me?”

“Once upon a time. But alas, I realized one-dimensional movie stars aren’t real people.”

“Not real people? What are we then?”

“You’re crab-people.”

“Of course.”

“So, Paris. Shame about all the French. Looking forward to it?”

Natalie hesitated. “Absolutely. I’m looking forward to everything coming up. Couldn’t be happier.”

Leaning over, I whispered, “Now say it like you mean it.”

She smiled, staring into my eyes.

“You know, you sound like my ex. Actually no, you sound like several exes. In fact, you sound like all of them.”

“Is that so?”

“They’re all off doing their thing, all very different, but all with that same unease in the tone of their voice. Like they want me to reassure them that everything will work out fine.”

“How many have you been through – wait. Don’t answer that. I don’t want to know.”

“Jealous?”

Natalie looked me up and down again. “A little.”

“Oh, Natalie. You’ll always hold a special place in my heart. Right next to my fetish for girls in knee-high socks.”

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“Whoa! Okay. Now that’s crossing a line. Jesus, I’m definitely more important than socks!”

“Not just any old socks. Knee-high motherfuckers!”

“I’m sure I brought some with me. And I look amazing in them. But you know, I’m more than just my socks!”

“I’ll be the judge of that.”

She smiled but was distracted. “You want to see them?”

Leaning back, I had to swallow my shock.

“I mean, we’re here because I wanted to ask you to paint me.”

“Like one of my French girls.”

Natalie licked her bottom lip and whispered, “You want to come back up to my room, little boy?”

“Fine. But I’m not going to fuck you. So, get that out of your head, right now!”

“Good. As long as that’s clear, we can both remain strictly professional.”

The next thing I knew, we were in the lift again.

Then walking down the corridor.

I was watching her tight ass as we returned to her suite.

“I’m shy,” she said. “So be gentle.”

“I’m not making any promises. But I’ll check out your socks. I’m only human after all.”

“There you go again, reducing me to nothing but socks,” Natalie said, grabbing one of her huge suitcases. “Do you have trouble imagining people complexly?”

“Ah, there’s that expression I keep hearing a lot these days. Usually by those that also say things like how much they hate stupid people,” I muttered, while moving toward the corner windows looking over Brandenburg Gate. “The infinite intolerance of the so-called sympathetic.”

When I finally turned around in that soft-lit hotel suite, I found myself standing across from someone dressed in a full-length black burqa.

“Hi,” I smiled. “Are you a ninja?”

“No!” Natalie laughed, “You’re so insensitive!”

“What part of ‘socks’ don’t you understand?” I asked, leaning back against the window frame, as Natalie approached. She then slowly raised her left leg, lifting up the thin black cloth, exposing her foot that she rested on the coffee table. And yes, she was wearing white, knee-high socks. “See, now this is perfect. I have just the socks to admire, and none of that superfluous identity of your awful character distracting my fixation.”

Natalie Portman & I

Natalie instantly threw the burqa back down covering her leg. Standing with her hands on her hips, she tapped her foot impatiently, saying, “I thought artists incessantly complimented their models!”

“Is that what gets you off? Bad pick-up lines from sleazy fucks with mummy-issues?”

“I’ve been photographed by Vogue, for Christ’s sake! I don’t need to listen to this.”

“Do you want a medal or something?”

“How about some respect?”

“Respect for what? The fact that you can cry on cue?” I replied. Even though I could only see her eyes, I could tell she was still smiling. “Shit, that’s basically all my exes could do, and you wouldn’t believe how much I disrespected them. And they were people that I actually fucking loved. You’re just a celebrity. What’s fame but the gross-exaggeration of someone’s mortal attributes. Idealizing anyone only ever leads to epic disappointment. I truly pity the day that Jesus might ever return.”

“So then, I guess, no more socks for you.”

“Ah, so it’s a tradeoff you want.”

“Isn’t everything?”

“Sure.”

“What’s in it for me?”

“I have no idea. What do you want? Why am I literally here?” I asked, as Natalie slowly crawled on all fours onto one of the big sofas. “And why the fuck do you even have a fucking burqa anyway? Isn’t that against every-fucking-thing you stand for?”

“Discovered I get less attention on the street while dressed in one of these.”

“I recently saw a film about Diana, about how she was constantly threatened by the media. It reminded me of a guy who said that Orwell was wrong, that ultimately, we’d all willingly put ourselves under constant observation. Which reminds me of an artist I know. We have polar-opposite opinions on identity-copyright. She was livid that I drew her without her explicit permission. So, I asked her, what if a model said no to her, what would she do? She shrugged, admitting she’d probably just continue painting them anyway. So why ask in the first place? Who the fuck needs permission to take a shit. Fuck that! The very act of a revolution is to fucking defy authority. I hate these fucking artists too fucking chickenshit to stand up for the fucking right to express their art freely without the fear of offending someone. Fuck

Bruce Stirling John Knox

their fear! Fuck their permission! And mostly, fuck all this spineless fucking art! Because in the fucking end, this is about more than just fucking art! My unconscious never asks me permission first, it just does what it fucking does!”

“So, you just don’t give a shit if you hurt someone’s feelings?” Natalie enticed, slowly rocking back and forth on her hands and knees.

“My only responsibility as an artist, is in creating the art!” I sneered in disgust. “I’m only interested in making my art as good as possible. That’s my priority, at the cost of everything else. And I fucking accept my marketing failure. But no one ever gave a fuck about my shit anyway, and I fucking know why, because every-fucking-thing I’ve ever fucking done is utterly fucking unimportant!”

“That’s the angry Bruce I was expecting,” Natalie said quietly. “If I give you permission, will you shut up and draw me?”

“Are you getting some kind of perverted thrill from this?”

“Aren’t you?”

From my point of view, Natalie was side-on upon the sofa, as she then lifted the burqa all the way up her legs and off her ass! She wasn’t wearing anything under it!

“Yes, those are some excellent socks. Yes. Yes, indeed.”

“So that’s a yes, you’ll draw me?”

“Fuck yes!”

Smoothly, in one steady movement, Natalie pulled the entire burqa off like a giant t-shirt. Leaving her stark naked with all her messy brown hair highlighting her exquisite face. I was frozen in a moment of all consuming, holy-fucking-shit awe!

“Wait,” I uttered, “I don’t have anything to draw you with.”

“Silly. I don’t want you to draw me here like this,” Natalie smirked. Sitting in the middle of the sofa, she crossed her legs, and stretched her arms out confidently. “I mean in New York, when we both have more time. I just wanted to meet you and see if you’re really the psycho that Leslie made you out to be.”

“Who is more obsessed: the stalker, or the stalked who stalks the stalker?” I grinned, still examining her tanned skin and little tits. “You always walk around naked under that thing?”

“Aren’t we all naked under our clothes?”

“Burqas always made me laugh. As if it’s the ultimate protection from getting raped. Besides, most females in burqas have more to fear from their

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own fucking husbands raping them to death than anything. But hell, chattel is chattel, and slaves don't have the right to say no."

"That's an over-simplification," Natalie stated.

"Anything anyone ever says is an over-simplification! Everything can be fucking elaborated upon. But do you really want to spend the next hour expanding on the very definition of moral-relativity verse the-law-of-the-land, before even stating the premise of the concept?" Suddenly, I realized I was standing directly above Natalie, as she reached up, slipping her fingers into my belt buckle, and then she pulled me down so that I was kneeling over her thighs.

"Is it acceptable to you to do anything at all in the name of art, regardless of ethics?" Natalie whispered, the tip of her nose touching mine as our eyes darted from left to right. "Sounds like an excuse, absolving actions in the name of art. Even criminal behavior. What's the difference between art and inciting hatred?"

"Depends if you're creating something rather than instructing others. I'm not telling anyone what to do. That's why I am not interested in people like Ai Weiwei, who gets others to build his shit. I'm not a fan of collaboration. At what point do these artists create a cult. I'm fucking repulsed by sheeple!"

"But you're part of a larger community. And you're preaching your opinion through your art."

"Opinion is just a reflected observation. Anyone who listens to me and takes anything on face-value without questioning, is a fucking moron!"

"But at some point, there has to be a mutual trust, where someone admires the work and can trust the informer not to give false evidence. That's how knowledge is passed down."

"I don't know a single person I trust that much," I hissed, my hands sliding up Natalie's shoulders, moving up to her throat. "Look at you. You're a mother and a wife, yet here we are. Alone together."

"Who said we're alone?" Natalie whispered, her mouth so close I could taste her words – and then I sat back. She smiled, tilting her head. "What if I told you that this was all for art. That what we're doing right now is art."

"Are we being filmed? Or are you just using art as an alibi for your infidelity?"

"We're constantly being watched, even if by our own eyes. But there are some people who can see us better than we ever really see ourselves."

"You mean therapists?"

"I mean artists," Natalie said quietly.

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I looked away. “I can’t help you then.”

“What are you saying?”

“I only see whatever I want to fucking see. If you’re looking for an objective, rational perspective—”

“I wouldn’t have asked you, if that’s all I needed.”

“You make it sound like you’re having a mid-life crisis.”

“Yet you’re the one quitting your art.”

“Don’t go there, sister.”

“Why are you so uncomfortable talking about it?”

I stood up, but she grabbed my hand.

“Tell me!”

“Why don’t you tell me why you’re naked with a complete fucking stranger in your hotel room?”

“You remember Leslie?”

“No! Who the fuck is this Leslie? Did I shit in her cereal or something?”

“The agent you contacted in 2003.”

My eyes glazed over, and I eventually sat on the coffee table in front of Natalie.

“And in 2007, I also heard about you.”

“The Tom Waits video? Epitaph or Anti Records, they contacted your lawyers back then. That guy Hein told me that you saw my animation. You said it was ‘pretty cool’. Except for the bonus scene at the end of the credits.”

“Yeah, that’s right. It was rad.”

“So, what the fuck happened? Why was I met with a wall of fucking silence after that? Hein said they wanted to promote it as the official music video. But then. Nothing.”

“Well, you’d already been red-flagged by Leslie.”

I sighed and shook my head slowly. “That motherfucker told me that Giger would have no fucking interest in ever seeing my work. Fucking piece of shit. We’re talking about the guy who painted a wall of cunts getting fucked, and got the Dead Kennedys charged with obscenity! Yet I’m the sickfuck?!”

“And yet here we are,” Natalie smiled.

“Yeah. So, what changed?”

Natalie crossed her arms over her delicious breasts, she seemed cold, so I pulled the burqa around her shoulders like a blanket. “Thanks.”

“You okay?” I asked, as she hunched over. “Seriously, do you need a hug?”

“Maybe,” she laughed weakly. So, I sat next to her and wrapped my long

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arms around her back as she buried her head in the small of my neck, and I squeezed. She inhaled slowly and then trembled. Her hands crept around my shoulder-blades as she held on for dear life. I stayed there in that lovely hotel suite in the small hours, resting my cheek against her head, and got high on the smell of her hair.

“There’s a movie coming out in a week, called, *The Fault In Our Stars*. It’s not really my cup of tea, but in the last year I’ve become aware of the author, John Green. Turns out he’s the same age as me. And I’ve had this weird thought, that he’s like the version of me that I could’ve become if I was actually a good person. I like watching his Vlog Brother clips with Hank. Despite their overly optimistic well-wishing, I enjoy keeping updated. I think I need it, especially when there isn’t much positive going on in my life. You know, sometimes I wonder why I’m not a better human being who cares about starving kids in war-stricken countries. But I’m no John Green and never will be. Yet, if you need a hug. That’s some small thing I can do. But that can’t console everything else that I’ve fucked-up in my life.”

“No, it can’t. But it matters, right now,” Natalie spoke into my neck. “Sometimes all that means anything is what you do for the sake of the present tense, rather than seeking later gratification. Be there for someone when they need it most. What’s more important than that?”

“I’ve always wondered what it’s like being in a disaster. Just to see how I’d react under truly shit circumstances. Discover what kind of piece of shit I really am. You ever been under that kind of pressure?”

“Not really.” Natalie’s fingers then dug into my shirt, and I realized it was wet from her tears. “But I’ve seen some terrible things.”

“Did it make you a better person?”

“I don’t know. But do we really need to survive atrocities in order to become good people? Can’t we learn to improve ourselves no matter where we are.”

“Are you a believer that we’re all born good, and that it’s evil that’s learned?”

“We’re just born. And sometimes shit happens. But if the environment dictates destiny, then how do you explain those who rise through adversity, like Mandela?”

“Exceptions to the rule don’t change the statistical probability that the masses will remain mundane.”

“But as a whole we’re much better off than ever before.”

“Sure. Couldn’t argue with that,” I whispered, stroking Natalie’s spine

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with my thumb. “But at what cost to the planet and every other living thing, including ourselves?”

“I didn’t realize you were such a tree-hugger.”

“Couldn’t give a fuck about the melting glaciers, or children bathing in toxic waste, or the endless choirs of suffocating battery-hens. But we’re still responsible for all of it! Though, who gives a shit about the destruction of the rain forests, as long as we humans as a whole are doing just fantastic! It’s all fucking magick! DISTRACTION FROM THE TRANSMUTATION OF SELF-DESTRUCTION!”

Natalie didn’t say anything after that.

I then remembered my time in India, when my girlfriend started crying from two weeks of my negative tirades. So, I snapped out of it and changed the subject. “Hey, but what did Kubrick say about life?”

“Stanley?” Natalie asked.

“Is there any other?”

“Smart ass.”

“He said something like, since life is so fucking meaningless, it forces us to create our own meaning.”

“But whatever something means to me, might mean nothing to you.”

“Pretty much.”

“That’s why we only find accommodation once we form a common ground.”

“And isn’t that how arguments are won? By understanding the point of view of the other guy.”

“That’s empathy, baby.”

I sat for a while.

“Is this where we are now, Bruce?” Natalie said. “Trying to reconcile each other?”

And then I had a bizarre moment, her voice had become so familiar from films, that hearing it here felt like I was actually trapped in some kind of Martin Scorsese flick – and then I straightened up, remembering what she’d said earlier, about us not being alone. Was this all some kind of experimental film? Were there hidden cameras in the walls? Was this some art-house thing that was going for a new level of realism? Or was I seriously just paranoid and unable to accept the fact I had a naked Natalie Portman in my arms? I then asked, “What are we reconciling, exactly?”

“Our differences?”

“We’ll never do that. We’ll always be apart. There will always be people

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like me, who drive us apart despite anyone trying to hold us together.”

“Conflict is appealing,” Natalie added.

“Who’s Chloe?” I asked.

Natalie slowly sat back, running both her index fingers under her smeared eyes. “Why do you ask?”

“Is she the director?”

“No. She’s an old friend of the family.” Natalie raised her knees up to her chest, as I leaned back, while my right arm was still around her shoulders. “She’s actually the real reason we contacted you.”

“Why?”

“It’s kind of silly.” Natalie shook her head. “I pride myself on being this rational, Harvard woman, but Chloe came to me convinced that I was being watched. Said she’d seen something that had come to her in a vision.”

“What had she seen?” I asked.

“Something about a house where some kind of unnatural event took place.”

“What’s that got to do with you and me?”

“You were there, at Loch Ness a year ago.”

“That whole situation had nothing to do with you.”

“Chloe’s certain that her vision was all true. She’s the one who searched for you. Found what you wrote. She says there’s something attached to you. That it’s still with you. You brought it back from Loch Ness.”

“And you believe her?”

“She’s special to me,” Natalie whispered, not bothering to explain.

“What exactly did I bring back?”

“Nothing. Chloe needs medication. She sees things that aren’t really there.”

“Is she schizophrenic?”

“I don’t know, but she’s never been like this before.” Natalie then laughed sickly. “When you left the hotel before, Chloe burst into tears, saying the whole room was full of these black things. I don’t know what’s wrong with her.”

“Still don’t see how you’re connected to any of this.”

“You’d have to ask her.”

“You do know, everything I wrote about at Loch Ness, it did all happen. And yet, my experience is not the same as her experience. No matter what evidence or explanation I have, sometimes there isn’t any common ground.”

“What happened there?” Natalie asked, turning her whole body toward

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me.

“Read what I fucking wrote. I think it’s all very fucking clear. But you won’t. No one ever does.”

“Perhaps you should see a doctor.”

“Why? Am I threatening you? Am I being hysterical?”

“Do you see the same things that Chloe saw?”

“What does it matter?”

“I don’t believe you, you do care.”

“And I don’t give two fucks what you believe.”

“Tell me where you’re going!”

“Away.”

“Where exactly is that?”

I waited.

“Who have you told?”

“No one.”

“What do you mean, no one. You have to tell someone where you’re going.”

“No, I don’t.”

“That’s not cool. You have people who care about—”

“Whoa! You don’t know anything about me!”

“Everyone has friends. And you’re not a total asshole. You know, I don’t run after just anyone on the street.”

“And I’m glad that you did. Or else I never would’ve gotten you naked. And from a pure aesthetic appraisal of your physical composition: you’re a fucking hot little number! But you already knew that. You don’t need another sycophantic leech gnawing away at your tit.”

“No,” she said with a coy smile. “But I needed the hug,”

“We all need someone who’ll tolerate us from time to time.”

“Maybe.” Natalie stared at her feet on the edge of the sofa. “You mentioned Diana. The biggest problem with fame really is such a fucking cliché. You know, constantly surrounded by people, but no one that you can depend upon. A confidant. Such first-world fucking problems.”

“That’s another expression I dislike. A condescending dismissal of another’s pain. Just ‘cause you live in the first world doesn’t change the relevance of your given stress. You might have food in your belly, but that can’t stop you from suffering in a million other fucking ways.”

“Yeah, but I’m not struggling to find drinking water each day just to survive. That’s a whole other level of stress.”

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“No shit, but all our ancestors were in that exact same situation at some point. Just ‘cause someone invented flushing toilets, doesn’t mean they also discovered the cure to all forms of possible torment.”

“Yeah, mental illness can affect anyone.”

“We’re all somewhere on a spectrum of mental disorder, no exceptions.”

“So, if you appreciate that we’re all similar on some level, then you can relate to someone else beyond yourself.”

“You tell me, Jew girl. Can you see it from Hitler’s point of view?”

“Always got to go too far, don’t you.”

“What’s the point of discussing such ideas if you don’t?”

“I think what he did was an act of unspeakable evil, and yes, I find it hard to see it from his point of view.”

“If evil is just a state of mind, and all thoughts are at some level mental illness, then given enough time, do you consider it possible to empathize with someone even as extreme as Hitler?”

“Empathize perhaps. But justify, no!”

“Justifications are purely subjective. If you could empathize completely, you would also rationalize what he did. Or you’re really not empathizing hard enough.”

“Are you trying to justify the Holocaust?”

“I’m talking about empathy. Couldn’t care less about six-million dead Jews here, or twenty-six-million dead Russians there. Evolution has a much bigger death toll at the end of the day.”

“I’m not asking you to love everyone.”

“Then what are you asking?”

“That if you can empathize with others, then can you see why you can’t just ignore everyone and hurt those that care about you?”

I looked at Natalie’s tiny little feet.

“Where are you going?” she whispered again.

“Reputations. I’ve come to the conclusion that someone’s reputation is as close a construct to this concept that anyone has of an immortal soul. Forget about your genes, they only have a vague relevance to you personally. Your reputation is something that you create, and yet, once again, have little control over. If you have a bad reputation, then you’re a bad fucking person forever more.”

“That’s only an illusion. It’s not who we really are. Everything we’ve been talking about is based on what others perceive against what we hold inside.”

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“And what we hold inside means nothing to the greater universe. So, would you rather be remembered as a good girl or a mass murderer?”

“I don’t need to answer that,” Natalie frowned. “Our innermost thoughts might be irrelevant to the outside world, but they matter to us, they shape us, guide us as individuals.”

“So even if we’re all guilty of thought-crime,” I said facetiously, “As long as we don’t share it, we’re all good?”

“Your secrets are just a form of control! And this big secret of yours, where you’re going, it’s also a desperate attempt to maintain some power over your life, when you know yourself that you don’t have any!”

I nodded. “Just like your prying nature is merely the Electra complex exerting itself in order to control me.”

“Is this all a fucking game to you?!” Natalie sneered.

“Of course,” I smiled.

“If there’s nothing I can say that will get you to talk, then how can we have a dialogue?!”

“I thought that’s what this was.”

“Why do you refuse to speak to me?!”

“My mind is already made up.”

“Then there can be no resolution!”

“I don’t believe in such things.”

“Talk to me! Engage in open discourse!”

“No.”

“Why do you refuse to help yourself?!”

“Who said I needed help?”

“Because none of this is healthy!”

“Says the girl hanging out with her stalker. Seems like you’re the one in need of help. Transference much?”

“Don’t do that!”

“So, it’s cool for you to play pet-shrink, but not me. Smells like typical female hypocrisy.”

“I have a degree, what do you have besides your fleeting moments of compassion?! I think you’re in need of a hug more than I was!”

“Whoa, whoa, whoa!” I pushed away to the other end of the sofa. “I hugged you once, don’t expect a repeat performance, sunshine!”

“Oh, I forgot. You’re celibate,” Natalie grinned. “So, what would you do if I started hitting on you?”

I sniggered, “You mean, hitting on me AGAIN.”

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“You didn’t seem to mind it before.”

“That’s ‘cause I’m a gentleman.”

“Of course. And that’s why I invited you back.”

I bit my tongue.

“But let’s just say, hypothetically,” Natalie whispered, as she slowly stood above me, and then dropped the burqa to the floor. “Would you tell me your secret if we fucked?”

-

An hour later.

“Life isn’t without its bitter fucking irony,” I said, catching my breath as I lay naked on the floor in the middle of the suite.

“That ain’t no lie,” Natalie confirmed, her socked toes rubbing against my bare foot as she lay stretched in the opposite direction.

“Now I have to shave my head again.”

“No! Why? I love it! It makes you seem much more... Approachable!” Natalie stated, crawling over until she lay on my chest. “Okay, it could be re-worked.”

“Are you calling me ugly?”

“I’m calling you interesting.”

“Bitch!” I gasped. “Well, at least you like my personality.”

“I didn’t say that! Don’t you be putting words in my mouth!”

Looking at her lips, I replied, “‘Words’, is that what the kids are calling it these days?”

“Shut your face!” she sneered, and sat up, straddling me, both of her hot palms against my tattooed chest. “This never happened.”

“Of course not,” I smiled wider, my hands on her hips. “Like I said, irony. Bitter fucking irony. When I first noticed you back in ‘99, you were just an archetype that I directed my frustrations upon. But now, you’ll forever remain a fucking secret. So many hidden lives kept secret.”

“Am I a problem for you?” Natalie asked.

“You know you aren’t,” I replied, running my fingers over her sweaty belly button. “And now you know my secret, so we have to trust each other.”

“Ultimately, we don’t have to trust anyone.”

I swiveled my head, listening.

“Heard this thing about a kid at McDonald’s. Bill Murray apparently came up and started eating his French fries, saying, no one will ever believe this happened. And then he just walked away. Same thing applies here. You could tell anyone about all of this here tonight, and who in their right mind

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would seriously listen to you? Especially with your reputation.”

“I had a realization a few weeks ago, backstage at the Nachtmahr gig. That I like having affairs more than anything. See, last year I became increasingly disgusted by how incestuous everyone was. Everyone is fucking everyone. And sure, I was absolutely guilty of being one of those fucks. But it all became about the bragging. I felt less and less toward everything! But the fucking thing is: I’ve always had the most intense feelings for someone who was kept secret.”

“People will always want what they know they can never have.”

“Is that why you found me? Because of my red-flag. You wanted to meet someone you were warned to stay away from. Do you also like to hunt lions, tigers, and bears?”

“Don’t flatter yourself. You’re just adorable!”

“Like a lovable little snuggle bunny?”

“Oh my god! That’s so totally you!”

“Call me Uncle. Uncle Fingers.”

“Eww!” Natalie giggled, as I tickled her ribs, and we rolled around the floor at the bottom of the bed.

Grabbing her waist, I flipped her over the bed. Her knees were still on the floor, as I pressed myself against her ass, and leaned in up to her ear. “If you ever tell anyone my secret, I’ll fucking kill you,” I whispered, pushing my forehead against her skull. “Now fucking ask me if I’m fucking bluffing?!”

Both of Natalie’s arms supported our weight, as she held her breath, and then eventually responded, “I believe you.”

“Fucking liar,” I said, before releasing her and grabbing my jeans.

Natalie inched up the destroyed bed and sat against the headboard, watching as I pulled on my Chucks while perched upon the large armchair facing her.

“How many affairs have you had since you got married?” I asked, tying my shoelaces.

“You know, we’re not all like you, Bruce.”

“Yes, you are. I’m just like everyone.”

“No.”

“I learned recently that my understanding of the word ‘whore’ was wrong. I’d thought it was slang for a prostitute. But it’s not. It simply means anyone who has promiscuous sex. So, we are all fucking whores!”

Natalie glared defiantly back at me.

“If we’re all guilty then why even bother denying it? If everyone’s a

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where, then that means we're the very fucking status quo of humanity. Why act ashamed of our underlining human nature?"

"BECAUSE IT'S VULGAR!"

My head drifted aside. She was absolutely right. "We must keep up appearances. Maintain the illusion of beauty, despite our actions."

"Why do you always have to focus on the negative? People are more complex than that. You just choose to ignore the context in support of your bias."

"Yeah. And. So do you."

"I choose to help those when I can. Do you even try to do anything constructive in a positive light?"

I just looked up at Natalie's thighs.

"We all need a little fun, vent, and let off some steam. As long as we're careful and no one gets hurt, then it's healthy," Natalie said, as she came closer, lying on her stomach. "You should try harder, fight for what really matters to you, and not get dragged down into this self-destructive obsession."

"And then no one gets hurt?" I chuckled. "Someone always gets hurt."

"That's simply not true."

"Look, I'm pretty friendly with all of my ex-girlfriends. They know me better than most, but I don't recall a single one of them ever defending me as a person. As soon as someone accuses me of one of the many shit things that I've been blamed for, they all roll their eyes and say, yeah, that was probably Bruce. Never the benefit of the doubt. And these are the same people that you claim fucking care about me!"

"You don't know that. You're assuming too much."

"A conscious observation witnessed first-hand many fucking times, is not a fucking assumption!"

"You're looking at it the wrong way."

"Maybe. But how many times have I heard them confess, now that they're with a new guy, that they're doing the exact same fucking shit that they once accused me of doing. Yet now they laugh about it. Their fun and games are all innocent, and like you say, no one gets hurt. Even though they're whoring around town. I could tell you some debauchorous fucking stories. Yet when they catch their current boyfriends so much as chatting with their ex, it's all, men are such fucking pigs. Still, these same girls will have some of the most sexually depraved conversations with me, Bruce, King Pig. The burning hypocrisy here only serves as a reminder, that as bad as I once was to all of them, they were doing the exact same shit behind my fucking back too!"

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Because we're all the fucking same! The only difference between you and me, Natalie, is I want to go to fucking hell!"

"It sounds like you're already there."

"Then maybe it's true. I'm already dead."

"Please." Natalie reached her hand out. "Just don't go to—"

I lunged forward, clamping my right palm over her fucking mouth, my left hand grabbing the back of her skull! "You promised not to talk about it! Don't break your fucking promise! Not while I'm still in the fucking room!"

She nodded her head with a sour look in her eyes.

Releasing Natalie, I grabbed my shirt and jacket.

"You need an intervention."

"You mean exorcism."

"Maybe both."

"Yeah, and who the fuck is going to do that?!"

Natalie went blank.

"It's too fucking late."

"Will I even see you again?"

"Once *Bark* is done, if you get me a ticket to New York, I'll do your portrait. And we can pretend like none of this ever happened. You can play the perfect role of a dutiful wife and mother, and I'll be the charming artists you once met by accident in Berlin," I said, opening the door out of the suite – when Natalie suddenly ran up and slammed it shut!

"Wait!"

"Why?"

"I never thanked you."

"For what?"

"For not talking about my films."

"I don't like any of your work. I like you as a person."

"Charming."

And then I whispered, "Once, Clive Owen asked you what your cunt tastes like? You replied, 'heaven.'"

She smiled, "And?"

And I kissed Natalie Portman goodbye, and then shut the door behind me.

As I walked through the early morning light, down Unter Den Linden, I watched the city begin to come alive like clockwork. I didn't need to be here, and it would all keep ticking on by one second at a time. So, was I even here now? Had I actually met Natalie? Plugging in my headphones, I selected *White Zombie*, *Real Solution* #9. One thing was for certain, like that song

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kept repeating: I'm already dead.
Bruce



SOUNDTRACK

10 DAYS IN THE MADHOUSE

HOW I ENDED UP IN HOSPITAL

The Doors, *The End*

Metallica, *Don't Tread On Me*

THE SMALL HOURS

Nick Cave And The Bad Seeds, *We Real Cool*

Fever Ray, *If I Had A Heart*

Kyuss, *Space Cadet*

Puscifer, *Horizons*

LOCH-FUCKING-NESS

Tool, *Opiate*

Nick Cave And The Bad Seeds, *And No More Shall We Part*

NATALIE PORTMAN & I

Soulfly, *No Hope = No Fear*

White Zombie, *Real Solution #9*

OTHER WORKS BY BSKJ 2001 - 2014

- First exhibition: Fingers In My Orifices. 2001.
Finished writing my first book after 10 years: "Apocalypse, Holocaust, Armageddon". 2003.
Second exhibition: Fuck The Weak. 2003.
Third exhibition: The Strength Of Hatred. 2004.
Forth exhibition: Pandora's Meat. 2005.
Art: Saturn Returns & The Divine Contradiction. 2006.
Art: This Disgust. 2006.
Art: Hell Hath No Fury. 2007.
Art: In My Father's Footsteps. 2007.
Art: Beloved Beheaded. 2007.
Art: The Goddess. 2007.
Music video: Make It Rain – Tom Waits. 2007.
Love letters: The Bane Of My Life. 2008.
Music video: 18.12. – Sinah. 2008.
Art: We Vulgar Creatures. 2008.
Music video: Closer – Richard Cheese. – (Nine Inch Nails) 2008.
Self-portraits: Disarticulation. 2008.
Music video: Just A Car Crash Away – Marilyn Manson. 2009.
Art: For My Idle Hands. 2009.
Music video: Indifference – Pearl Jam. 2009.
Art: Power-Game. 2009.
Self-portraits: A Personal Hell. 2010.
Music video: Danger Global Warming – The Blacksmoke Organisation – (Remix John Fryer) 2010.
Art: Jealous As Fuck. 2010.
Concept art for a movie pitch: Alienated. 2010.
Self-portraits: Not Dead Yet. 2011.
Movie pitch: Alienated. 2011.
Short story 1: 10 Days In The Madhouse. 2011.
Art: The Rational Animal. 2011.
Short story 2: How I Ended Up In Hospital. 2012.
Music video: I Lost Control – The Girl & The Robot. 2012.
Art: Perpetuation. 2012.
Short story 3: The Small Hours. 2013.
Short story 4: Loch-Fucking-Ness. 2013.
Art: Inconsequential Consent. 2013.
Self-portraits: The Boy Who Cried Wolf. 2013.
Art: Antimother Of God. 2013.
Short story 5: Natalie Portman & I. 2014.

